# LA RONGE
## COMMUNITY PLANNING STUDY

June, 1986

uma

Norplan Consulting Ltd.

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

June 18, 1986

Mr. Mel Hegland
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La Ronge, Saskatchewan
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Mr. John Lere, Manager
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Saskatchewan Urban Affairs
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Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
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Gentlemen:

Re: La Ronge Planning Study

The consulting group, comprising UMA Engineering Ltd., Consulting Engineers and Planners, and Norplan Consulting Ltd., is pleased to forward the La Ronge Planning Study to you at this time.

We have been pleased to work with you on this project. Our appreciation is extended to all members of Council and of the Planning and Zoning Committee, Mr. Bert Senft and Mr. Grant Roeland, Town Administrators during the course of the study, Ms. Nicki Brandon of Saskatchewan Urban Affairs, and to all others who contributed to the project.

We wish the Town of La Ronge much success in achieving its objectives.

Yours sincerely,

UMA GROUP

David H. Klippenstein

David H. Klippenstein, M.A., M.C.I.P.
Head
Planning

/emg

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## PREFACE

The La Ronge Planning Study has been prepared as part of the five-year Development Plan Review. The Study is intended to provide a description and analysis of the Town of La Ronge and area as background to the Town's Basic Planning Statement, which is prepared as a separate document. The Basic Planning Statement is the statutory plan under Saskatchewan's Planning and Development Act.

The Development Plan Review has been conducted by the UMA Group and Norplan Consulting Limited, working with the Town's Planning and Zoning Committee and with Town Council.

# PART ONE - THE COMMUNITY AND REGION - PAST AND PRESENT

## 1.0 LOCATION AND HISTORY

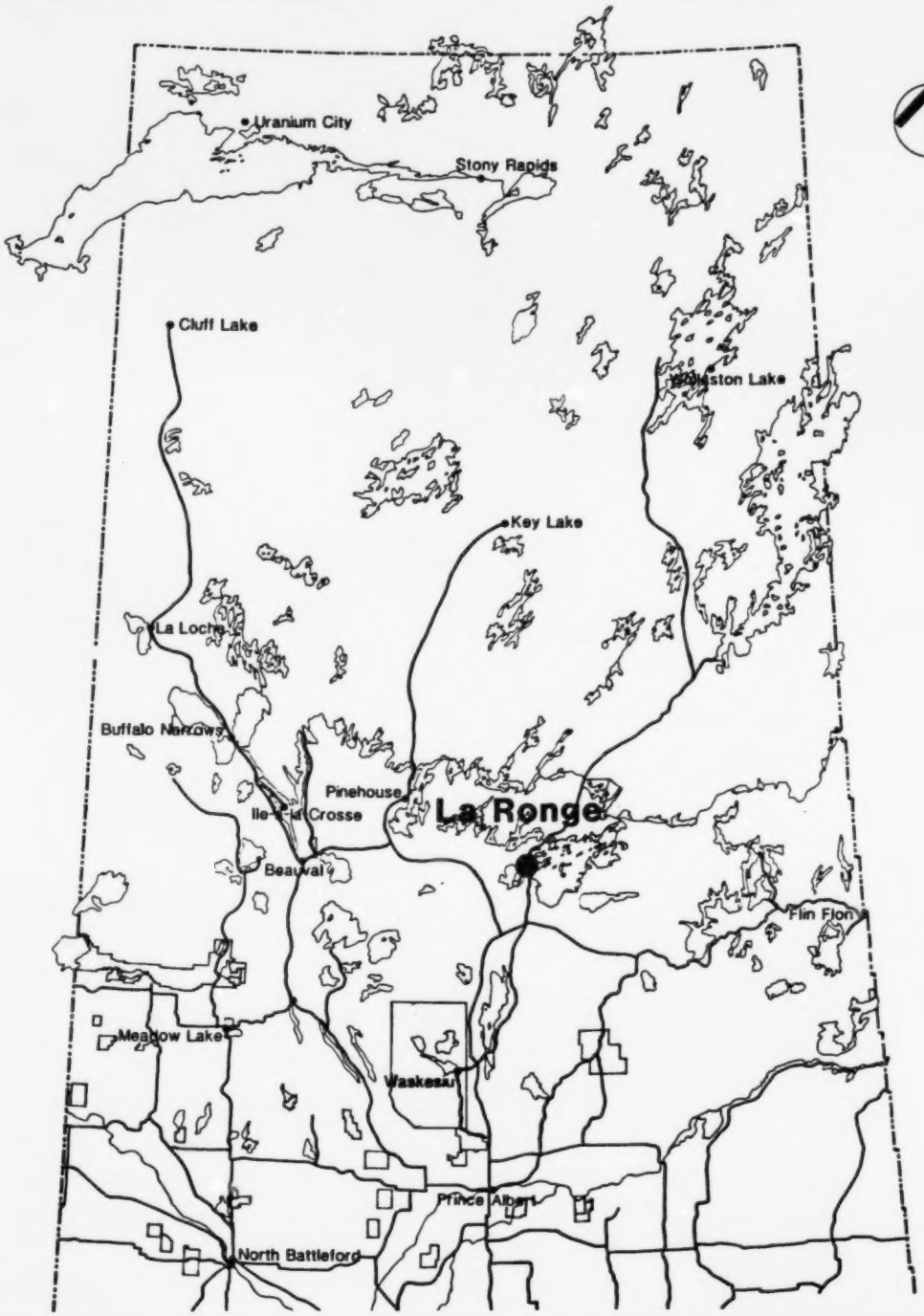
### 1.1 Location

The Town of La Ronge is located on the southwest shore of Lac La Ronge, just north of the mouth of the Montreal River. Two neighbouring communities, the Lac La Ronge Indian Band and the Northern Village of Air Ronge, are located just to the south. The Band occupies two Reserves: Kitsaki Indian Reserve No. 156B and the Lac La Ronge or Far Reserve No. 156.

La Ronge is the "Capital of Northern Saskatchewan". It is centrally located, within the northern part of the province. The La Ronge area constitutes the largest concentration of population within the northern half of the province.

La Ronge is linked by Highway No. 2 to Prince Albert (240 kilometres or 100 miles) and Saskatoon (400 kilometres or 240 miles). The Hanson Lake Road provides access to the "East Side" communities. Creighton and Flin Flon are at a distance of 400 kilometres (240 miles). The recently constructed Pinehouse-Beauval road provides a road link to the West Side communities of Beauval, Ile a la Crosse, Buffalo Narrows and others. To the north, Highways No. 2 and 102 extend beyond the Churchill River to Wollaston Lake and Rabbit Lake.

Regularly schedule air service links La Ronge with Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina to the south, and the communities of the Athabasca Basin to the north. In addition, La Ronge is a major base for charter aircraft travel into northern Saskatchewan to those areas not accessible by road.




# Location

# La Ronge Planning Study

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The La Ronge area sits astride the contact between two great physiographic regions of Canada - the Precambrian Shield to the north and the Great Plains to the south. Bedrock outcrops become more evident as one approaches La Ronge from the south. The pattern of bedrock and intervening muskeg exerts a strong influence on the physical form of the community.

La Ronge is located within a vast, thinly populated area of forest and lakes. Abundant natural resources exist which have been developed to a limited extent. The region awaits further development of mineral, tourism, forestry and other resources.

## 1.2 Historical Perspective

The following brief historical sketch is taken from the pages of the current informational brochures on La Ronge and area. Much greater detail is provided in a recent community history, "Our Roots: A History of La Ronge", published in 1981 by the La Ronge Heritage Committee.

> "There were trading posts on Lac La Ronge throughout the 1700s and 1800s. Early records show the first post was established at or near Waden Bay by free trader Etienne Waden in 1779. Many famous explorers wintered here, including Alexander Fraser, David Thompson and Peter Pond, who is reported to have killed Waden in a fight in 1782.
>
> The Hudson's Bay Company operated a post on La Ronge between 1797 and 1809, and again from 1819 to 1830, when it was abandoned in favour of a post far to the north at Reindeer Lake.
>
> In 1898, a Bay post was built three miles along the south shoreline from the Montreal River. By 1904, there was a Revillon Freres trading post in La Ronge, as the site where Lindy's Cabins presently stand. In 1914, the Bay moved to its present site in town.

But the earliest permanent settlement in the area was at Little Hills, between Bigstone and Egg Lakes, where an Anglican Church and associated school were operating by 1870. The focus of activity gradually moved down the Montreal River to where the traders were establishing, and in 1906, a new church and residential school were built on the shores of Lac La Ronge. The church still stands in its original location after several renovations; the school, which stood where the hospital is now, burned down in 1918, was rebuilt and operated in 1947 when it again burned to the ground.

Until 1948, travel to and from the south was accomplished by canoe in summer and dogteam or freight swing in winter. That year a road was completed to the community, making it much more accessible, and Old Gateway day school was built to replace the residential school.

By 1950 the town had, besides the Bay store, the school and the church, a theatre and pool hall; a lumber mill; a fish plant; a tourist camp; the DNR office; Saskatchewan Government Airways; a bulk oil depot; a cafe; four general stores and a Saskatchewan Timber Board yard.

In 1950, Lac La Ronge was incorporated as a village; eight years later the name was changed to La Ronge to avoid confusion with the lake.

In the early 1960's, a number of houses were built through a co-operative across the Montreal River to the south. Because of the vicinity of the airport, the community became known as Air Ronge. It has grown to a separately governed community of some 600 people.

In 1965, La Ronge was designated an industrial town with the opening of the Anglo-Rouyn copper mine 35 miles north, and the beginning of an open-pit nickel operation at Rottenstone Lake.

With the opening of the Anglo-Rouyn mine, homes and the Churchill School were built on the high ground to the north. Boardman Street was built to connect them to the main town. Later expansion extended northeast from here.

> By 1972, all mining operations near the town had ceased. For a while the future of La Ronge seemed in doubt, but the provincial government selected the town as its northern headquarters, taking up the slack and then some!
>
> Also in the 1970's, exploration for uranium was booming. The rebuilding and paving of the highway from Prince Albert, along with more and better campsites, contributed to a greater influx of tourists."[1]

Currently, government, mining activity and tourism are the mainstay of the town's economic base. Mineral exploration and government activity have declined since 1982 with an associated impact on the town. However, the future of the town is a positive one, as discussed in subsequent sections.

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1. Our Roots: A History of La Ronge. La Ronge Heritage Committee 1981.

## 2.0 LA RONGE - REGIONAL CONTEXT/ECONOMIC BASE

### 2.1 Recent Development

As the major regional centre for Northern Saskatchewan, La Ronge grew rapidly from 1974 to 1981. There were two significant factors fueling the rapid growth experienced by the Town in this period.

.1 The decision to locate the Department of Northern Saskatchewan headquarters in La Ronge and the subsequent rapid addition of staff positions allowed the Department of Northern Saskatchewan to carry out its service delivery mandate in the north.

Government staff were relatively well compensated. New employment opportunities became available to local people. Many more people relocated to La Ronge to take government positions.

The expenditure of about $350 million by the province was supplemented by an expenditure of about $120 million by the Federal Government during the eight year period from 1974 to 1982. Approximately 20% of that amount was expended within the La Ronge trading area and probably 40% of that went to wages or local contractors.

Reduced activity and staffing levels since 1982 left La Ronge with a surplus of both housing and commerical facilities. Regional income totals declined and the pressing need to develop services, experienced by La Ronge Council in 1979, has been alleviated.

.2 The energy crisis forced up the price of uranium in the early and mid 70's.

As a result of the high prices, exploration occurred at unprecendented levels, and much of the activity was based out of La Ronge. However, over the past five years, that activity has declined substantially and prices have dropped to half the 1977 levels. This has caused a further loss of local employment opportunity and regional incomes, further slowing the Town's rate of growth.

## 2.2 Regional Services

### .1 Government

In 1979, La Ronge was certainly a Government Services centre. Staff involved in the delivery of virtually all provincial government programs within the entire Northern Administration District, related to La Ronge. They travelled to, and communicated with, La Ronge on a regular basis. The one significant exception was the "public works" sector of the provincial government which retained its base of operations at Prince Albert.

With the heavy emphasis that the government of the day placed on infrastructure development, the retention of the planning and contract awarding functions in Prince Albert inhibited the development of such services as construction trades, building and equipment supply services, engineering services, etc., in La Ronge. That decision will have long range implications for northern development.

La Ronge is much less of a government centre today. The Department of Northern Saskatchewan has been dissolved. Programs, staff and annual expenditure have been significantly reduced. There is less travel and communication between La Ronge and the regional administration centres.

This has affected the community in several ways.

a) Population Decline: The number of government employees based in La Ronge has declined from 355 in May 1979 to 257 in May 1984, a loss of 108 jobs affecting 75 to 80 families. For the most part, those losing employment in La Ronge have taken employment elsewhere.

b) Loss of Salaries: The loss of 108 employment positions represents a loss of about $2,700,000 in salaries, at least some of which would have been spent locally. Many of the positions lost were senior positions at the upper end of the government pay scale.

c) Loss of Employment within the Trading Region: Capital construction activity (housing, schools, roads, airports, sewer and water systems) has been significantly reduced in the past three years. Most of the infrastructure development taking place in the Northern Administration District has involved the completion of projects that were undertaken in the early 1980's.

.2 Commercial Services

La Ronge has regarded itself as a centre for commercial services for the entire north. In reality it has only served those communities whose proximity by air/road make it more

convenient to use as a service centre than its major competitors. Meadow Lake serves the entire west side, from Green Lake to La Loche. Flin Flon/Creighton serve Deschambault, Pelican Narrows and Sandy Bay. Montreal Lake, Timber Bay and Weyakwin obtain most commercial services from Prince Albert. And, since the demise of Uranium City, residents of the five Athabasca communities are in search of a service centre, but have as yet, not shown much inclination to use La Ronge.

Residents of Wollaston, Southend, Brabant, Missinipe, Stanley Mission, Pinehouse, Air Ronge and the La Ronge Indian Band's northern reserves are traditionally within the La Ronge commercial services trading area.

.3 Educational Services

These services have been provided from La Ronge for the same communities as utilized its commercial services. There is some reason for optimism that the Athabasca communities might be added to the list if the level of service La Ronge could provide were modestly upgraded in such areas as out-patient accommodation, student accommodation, hospital facilities, and others.

a) Education Services

The La Ronge Regional Community College (L.R.C.C.) in addition to serving the general "adult upgrading" needs of the region, has embarked on a fairly ambitious plan to provide specialized skill training, at the post-secondary level, to residents of the whole N.A.D. They envision "off-campus" program delivery, loosely based on the NORTEP model.

The old Gateway School is being renovated for the programs, and former government staff accommodation is being allocated for student accommodation.

This activity holds promise for alleviating some of the negative effects of the reduction in other government activity, but the number of staff and students requiring services is likely to remain relatively small.

It now seems certain that the NORTEP program will continue to operate over the next three years, from a La Ronge base.

b) Health Services

The La Ronge Medical Clinic provides an outpost service to the communities within the commercial trading area, and the local hospital serves the same region. Construction of new hospital facilities is considered locally to be an urgent requirement. Existing facilities would be converted to Level II, III or IV Senior Citizens accommodation, which is also considered a critical requirement.

However, even the most optimistic do not see construction starting for two to three years.

New health care facilities would have a positive impact on the local economy in two ways: i) by requiring additional staff to operate the expanded facilities; and, ii) by enhancing the position of La Ronge as a regional services centre.

Coupled with improved accommodation for visiting out-patients and reliable air ambulance service, improved medical facilities in La Ronge might encourage residents of the Athabasca Region to use the Town as its service centre.

c) Social and Recreational Services

With so many changes taking place within the formal "social services" programs, it is difficult to comment on the direction the new policies will be leading. There is, however, an ongoing need for agencies to deal with the problems that accompany urbanization, industrialization, and the associated social trauma. La Ronge continues to be the centre from which most of these agencies operate.

.4 Services to Non-Renewable Resources Industries

Despite the benefits that were expected to accrue to La Ronge as the Wollaston Basin uranium deposits were developed, the three operating mines obtain virtually no services locally. K.L.M.C. currently employ thirty-seven persons from the commercial trading area, Cluff Mining employs five and Eldorado four. The salaries of these employees represent the bulk of the economic impact of the mines on the economy of La Ronge.

During the construction phase, all three mines hired significantly larger numbers of regional residents and local contractors, who in turn, obtained some of their required goods and services locally.

Mineral exploration has had a greater regional impact. The location of the Mining Records office in La Ronge, plus the geographically strategic location in relation to transportation and communication links and the region where exploration activity is taking place, have resulted in several expediting and exploration services firms (line cutting, prospecting, diamond drilling) locating here.

Since the 1979 Development Plan, however, the decline in world demand for uranium has had a significant impact on exploration activity. Uranerz has closed its office and Saskatchewan Mining Development Corporation has significantly reduced staff. Uranium exploration still results in the largest local expenditure, but gold and base metals are closing the gap. The recession has reduced all exploration activity, but a substantial recovery of interest and expenditure is becoming evident in 1985.

The transfer of the mining recorder office from Uranium City in September 1983, and the resident geologist and the recorder function from Creighton will tend to centralize all exploration activity in the north on La Ronge.

.5 Renewable Resources

a) Forestry

La Ronge has been on the northern fringe of the commercial forest belt, so forest exploitation activities within the trading areas have tended to be only marginally profitable.

As the southern resources are depleted and the commercial belt moves northward, more large scale exploitation can be anticipated within the trading region. La Ronge has not traditionally been a centre of service to the forest industry. Other than a possible increase in seasonal employment, the Town is unlikely to be significantly effected.

b) Trapping

The presence of at least four licensed fur buyers in Town has the effect of enlarging the trading area. Trappers from the Athabasca basin, the northwest side of the province, and the east side, bring furs to La Ronge, and obtain goods and services with the proceeds of sales. Fur prices rise and fall dramatically in response to global factors which are impossible to predict over the long term. The annual volume of furs traded reflect the price swings. While annual volumes vary, the level of activity in the industry has remained constant (within the high/low bounds) over the past thirty years, and is unlikely to change dramatically within the planning horizon of this report. The average annual volume of 1.5 to 2.25 million dollars realized locally from the sale of furs, a significant portion of which is recirculated locally for services, contributes substantially to the local economy.

c) Wild Rice

In recent years, La Ronge has developed as the provincial centre for commercial wild rice operations, with the first processing plant, as well as the facilities for

purchasing, marketing and servicing the industry. This activity will also have the effect of broadening the trading area, as producers spend a portion of their proceeds locally. Historical production levels have been in the $100,000 to $300,000 range, but estimates are that a $3 - $5,000,000 level is attainable. The size of the 1984 harvest shows how rapidly the industry has advanced.

d) Tourism

La Ronge is considered to be the gateway to wilderness fishing, canoeing and camping experiences, and about a dozen tourist camps and outfitters base their summer operations out of the community. In addition, the four local charter air firms estimate that as much as one-third of their summer charters involve the transport of tourists, or the food, fuel, and other supplies that tourists require.

No definitive work has been done in measuring the impact on the local economy of the tourist industry, but in addition to the four months of full time employment for the 60 - 80 people noted above, the other services in Town which would benefit would include the local service stations, restaurants, and liquor store.

Since the extensive work done in the 1970's on upgrading public camping facilities, both at La Ronge and further north, the need for tourists to obtain services in La Ronge has declined. Most of the Canadian tourist traffic, and much of the American, carry with them all of their food, fuel and other necessities. This fact is a challenge to those civic officials and entrepreneurs who desire a stronger tourism sector.

Tourists provide stiff competition to locals for the available resources; particularly fish and big game animals. The relative benefits of all sectors of the economy competing for these resources deserves some serious analysis.

e) The Commercial Fishery

The La Ronge fish processing plant serves commercial fishermen operating within boundaries corresponding closely with the La Ronge commercial area. Unlike trappers however, most fishermen do not personally deliver their catch to the plant, receive cash, and proceed downtown to acquire goods and services. A network of facilities for receiving, storing and shipping fish has been developed to alleviate the necessity for fishermen to make long truck hauls with small loads. In addition, the Fresh Water Fish Marketing Corporation (F.F.M.C.), operating out of Winnipeg or The Pas, retails fishermen's supplies (net, out-boards, etc.) directly to fishermen from a central purchasing depot. Only "grub stake" supplies are acquired locally.

The industry injects approximately one-quarter million dollars annually through payments to fishermen, and provides 100 to 180 man months of employment to La Ronge at the processing plant. Another $300,000 is paid to local trucking firms who transport the resource.

F.F.M.C. staff anticipates no significant changes over the next five years, although local fishermen complain about the decline in both the quantity of fish, and the cost squeeze affected by higher operating costs and lower fish prices.

## 2.3 Summary

La Ronge will no doubt continue its role as the commercial and administrative regional centre of Northern Saskatchewan. Despite the economic downturns of the years 1982 to 1984, the Town's central regional location and diversified economic base ensure, at the very least, a measure of stability to the community. The function of the community as a regional service centre, combined with prospects for growth in the development of renewable resource, especially tourism, and the prospects of renewed activity in mineral exploration and production, provide the basis for cautious optimistic planning in the second half of the decade.

## 3.0 LA RONGE - PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

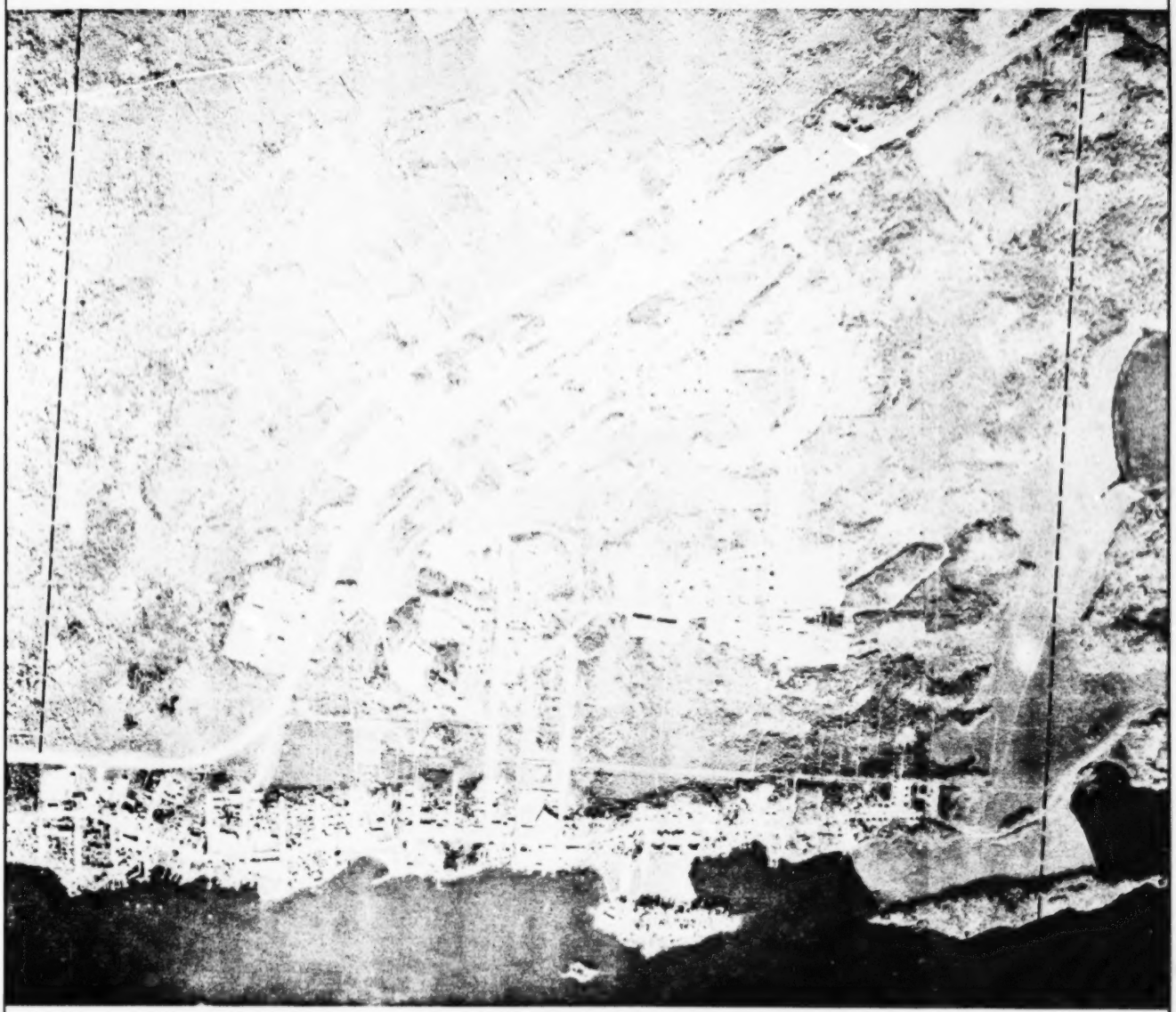
### 3.1 General Urban Form

The shape of La Ronge has been determined by two strong geographical influences - the shoreline of Lac La Ronge and the pattern of rock and muskeg (Plate 2). Unlike southern communities whose shape was influenced by the pattern of surveys, railway and roads, La Ronge has always been oriented to the lake. In this respect, it is like most other northern communities.

Access to water transportation was essential for early travel. Consequently, it is not surprising that the places of historical interest, the church, the Bay, the smoke jumpers depot and others are located on or near the lake. With the advent of air travel, the waterfront saw increased activity with float planes landing and taking off for other communities, tourist camps and exploration camps.

The shoreline influenced the basic survey pattern of the town as well (Plate 3). The base line established by the initial surveys was parallel to the lake, and lots were oriented to that base line rather than to true north and south. La Ronge Avenue, the 'Main Street' of the community, runs parallel to the lakeshore.

Today the town can be divided into two general areas, old and new. The older part of the town extends along the waterfront for a distance of about two miles. Inland, development extends to the top of the rock ridge which parallels the shore. Beyond that, muskeg forms an effective barrier to further growth. Thus, the older part of town extends back no more than 300 metres or 1,000 feet from the lake.



**Aerial View**

**La Ronge Planning Study**

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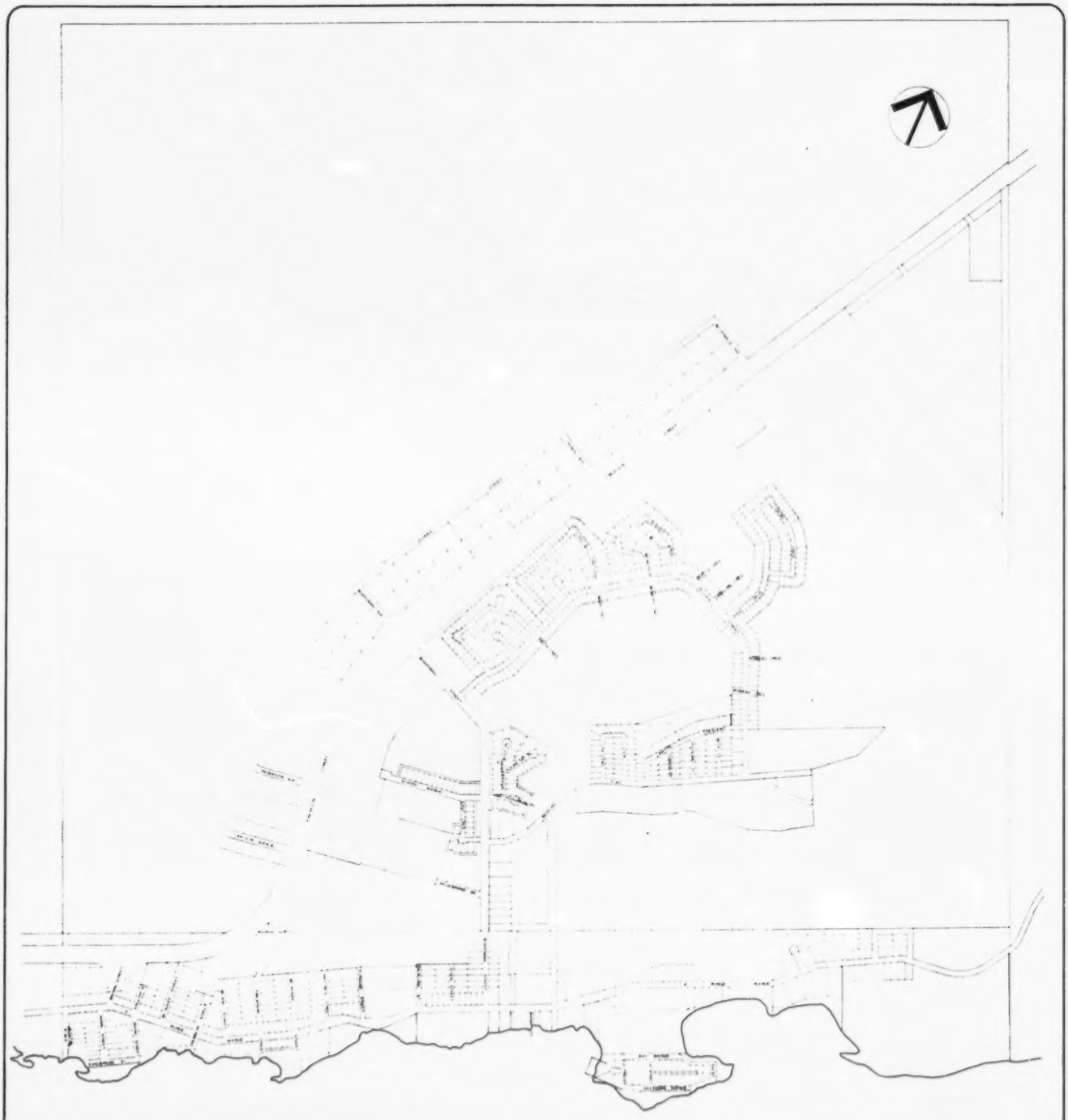

## Subdivision Pattern

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The newer part of town has developed well back of the shoreline. Developable land near the waterfront became limited in the middle 1960's, and new development was forced to leapfrog over the muskeg to the Churchill subdivision. Subsequent residential and institutional development has extended outward through the forest, following the line of high ground. Most recently, during the 'boom' of the late 1970's, the development of the SEDCO Industrial Park marked the extension of the town beyond Highway No. 2.

La Ronge is not a compact town. Rather it extends in a linear fashion along the waterfront and through the forest wherever the best land is located. This extended form has both advantages and disadvantages.

Because of the finger-like pattern of development, most residences are close to forest areas. The wilderness is almost literally at most peoples' back door.

The two miles of shoreline along Lac La Ronge is in an area of activity, interest and scenic potential unparalleled by any other Saskatchewan community. The Anglican mission provides historical interest, while the town parks provide a setting for a variety of recreational activities. A lot of potential remains for enhancement of the waterfront areas for the benefit of resident and visitor alike.

La Ronge Avenue, the town's main street, provides a series of views, not only of the lake but also of a succession of landmarks as it winds along the waterfront through town. Landmarks such as the tourist camps - Red's and Lindy's, the Bay, the Anglican Mission, the hotels, the beach and 'provincial' park, the hospital, the float plane base and finally the government complex

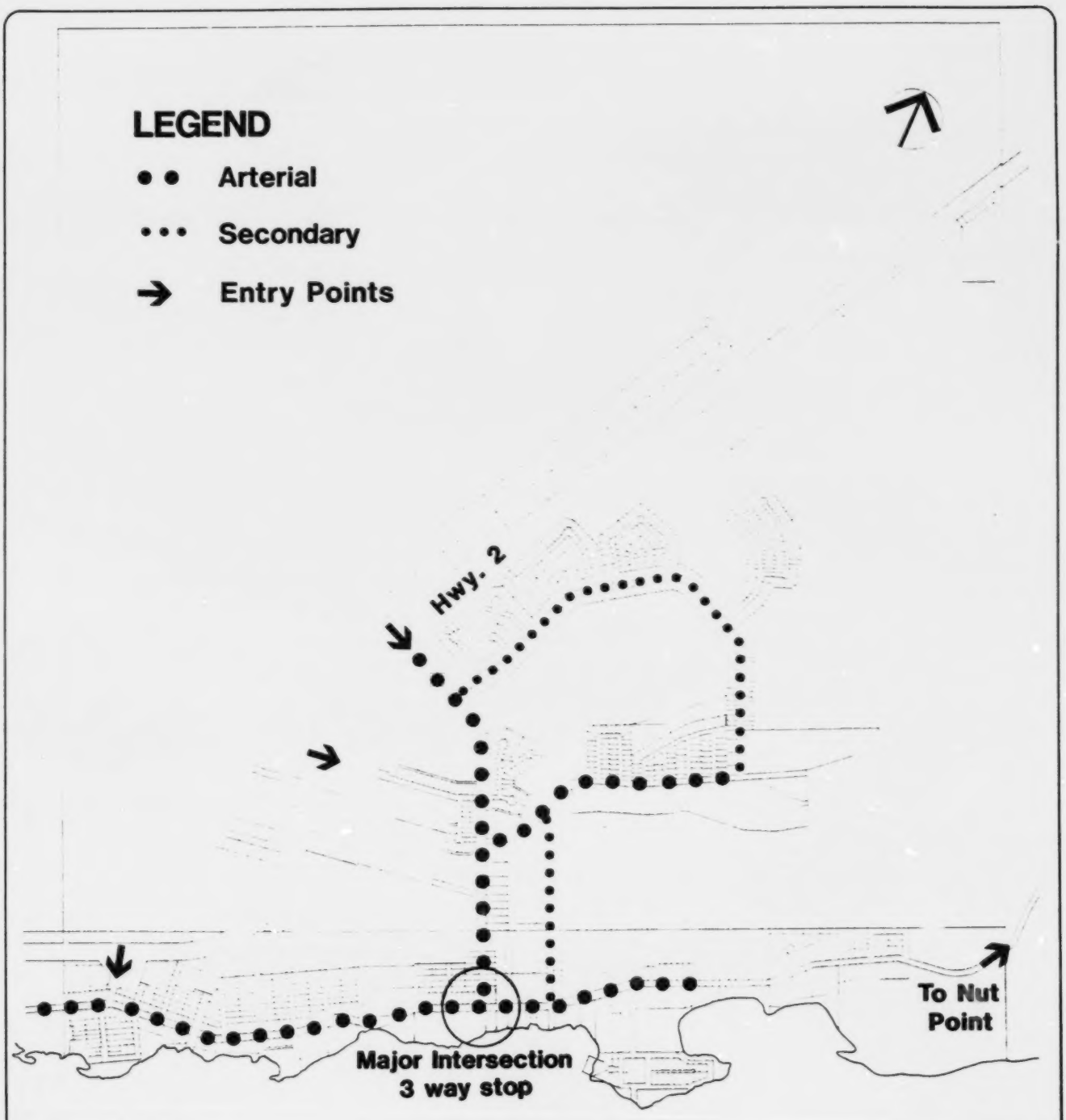
of Mistasinihk Place, provide a distinctive and unique series of visual images totally unlike any other Saskatchewan town of similar size. These images define La Ronge, an urban centre located in a setting of lake, rock, muskeg and forest.

However, the linear form of the town does have its disadvantages. There are only two road links between downtown and Highway No. 2, namely La Ronge Avenue and Boardman Street (Plate 4). Where these two intersect, considerable congestion can occur.

Because the eastern end of La Ronge Avenue basically is a dead end as it approaches Nut Point Campground, vehicles of all sizes have few places to turn around east of Boardman. Large vehicles often turn around in the road or on someone's driveway, to everyone's annoyance. The solution to this problem, a loop road back to the highway, is technically feasible, but no doubt of quite considerable cost.

The entire 'downtown' has limited area for expansion and for parking. While there are opportunities for further infill, space is limited and can only be created by further encroachment on the muskeg.

As a result, a new institutional focus has developed - the complex comprising the Uniplex, new town office and library, day care, Churchill High School and Precambrian School. While set back substantially from the lake, the area does have room for expansion and further facility development.




# Traffic

# La Ronge Planning Study

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## 3.2 Physical Development Constraints

### .1 Topography, Bedrock, and Muskeg

The difficulty and expense of installing conventional sewer and water services is the main reason for classifying several areas as having limited suitability for development. This expense is related to physical development constraints.

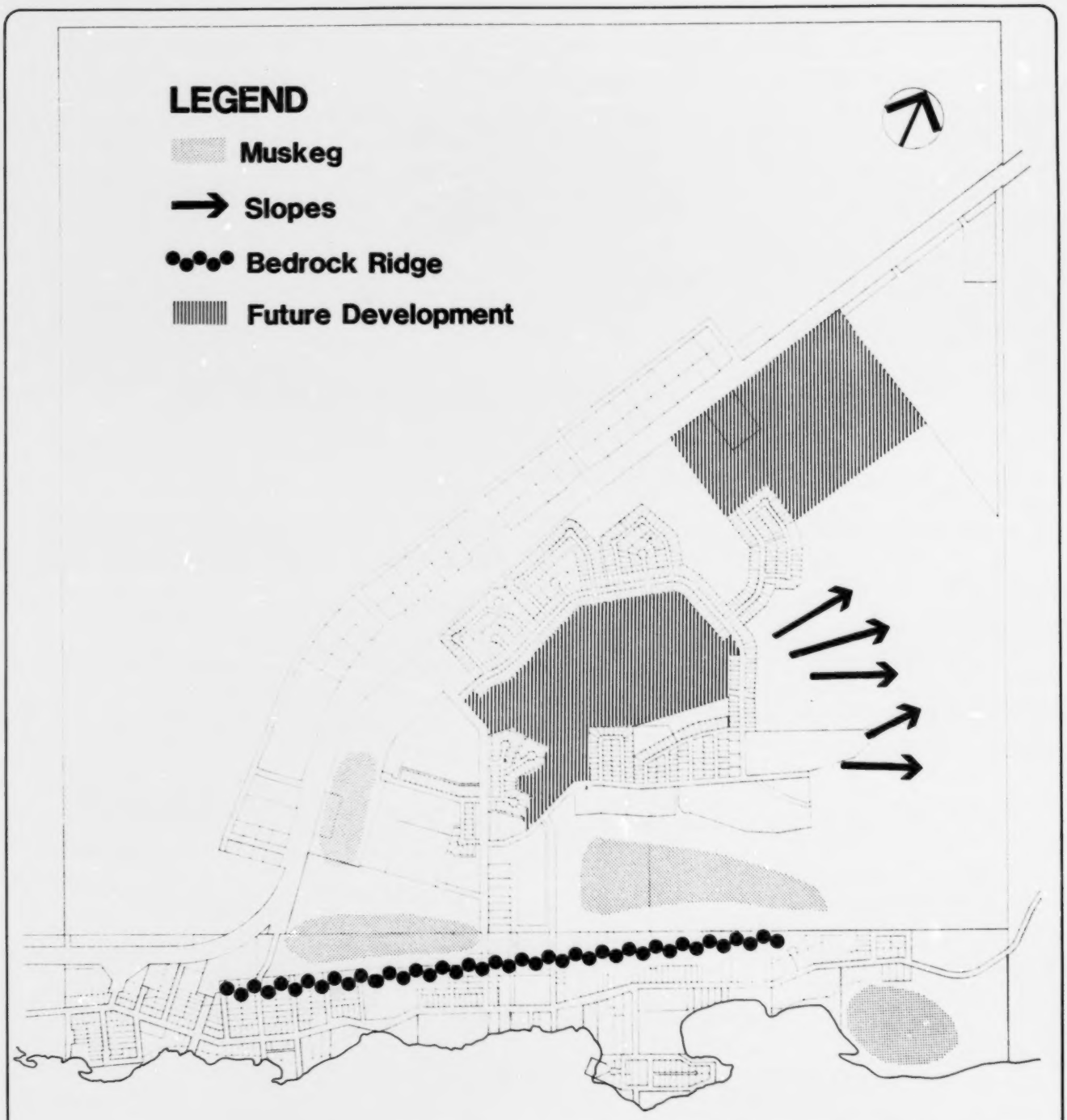
Three physical constraints contribute to servicing problems. These are topography, bedrock and muskeg areas (Plate 5).

The downtown area is bounded to the north by a high bedrock ridge, about thirty metres above lake level, running from Finlayson Street to McKenzie End. This ridge drops dramatically to muskeg as one proceeds northwards. As downtown area is bounded on the south by Lac La Ronge, a long narrow strip approximately 400 metres wide, is created. This strip constitutes the developable portion of the core area.

The newer residential areas are somewhat removed from the core as development has taken place on reasonably competent soil, beyond the muskeg areas. Muskeg and bedrock have played an important part in the location of this residential development and will continue to be a factor as expansion proceeds northwards.

### .2 Flood-Prone Areas

A number of low-lying lands exist lying close to the lake have been determined to be flood prone. Under the Canada/ Saskatchewan Flood Damage Reduction Agreement, flood risk mapping studies were carried out for La Ronge and Air Ronge.




**Development Constraints and Opportunities**

**La Ronge Planning Study**

**5**

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The 1:100 and 1:500 flood lake levels were derived taking into account the effect of inshore wind on increasing lake levels.

The results of the study determined the 1:500 flood level to be between 365.43 metres and 366.42 metres above sea level (a.s.l.). As the mean lake level is 363.52 m. a.s.l., the 1:500 flood levels are between 1.91 and 2.90 metres above the average calm level.

A major objective of the Flood Damage Reduction (FDR) program is to avoid or reduce damage to property resulting from flooding. Having identified the flood-risk zone, the next step is to adopt the most appropriate flood plain management tool. These can be both structural or non-structural in nature. Nonstructural approaches include regulation of land to avoid further development; flood proofing of existing or new structures; acquisition of flood prone lands; and emergency operations. Structural techniques include dyking and filling to modify the effect of flooding.

According to the FDR mapping, the flood prone area includes all docks and wharves along the shore. As well, some parcels of land along La Ronge Avenue, notably between the lake, Boardman Street and Louis Road East are within the zone.

Ultimately, the most effective technique to avoid flood damage losses is to adopt a policy to limit development within the flood zone.

Such a policy can be implemented through a flood plain zone incorporated into the zoning bylaw to limit development in the area, unless development can be flood-proofed through fill, dyking or structural modifications.

## 3.3 Residential Land Use

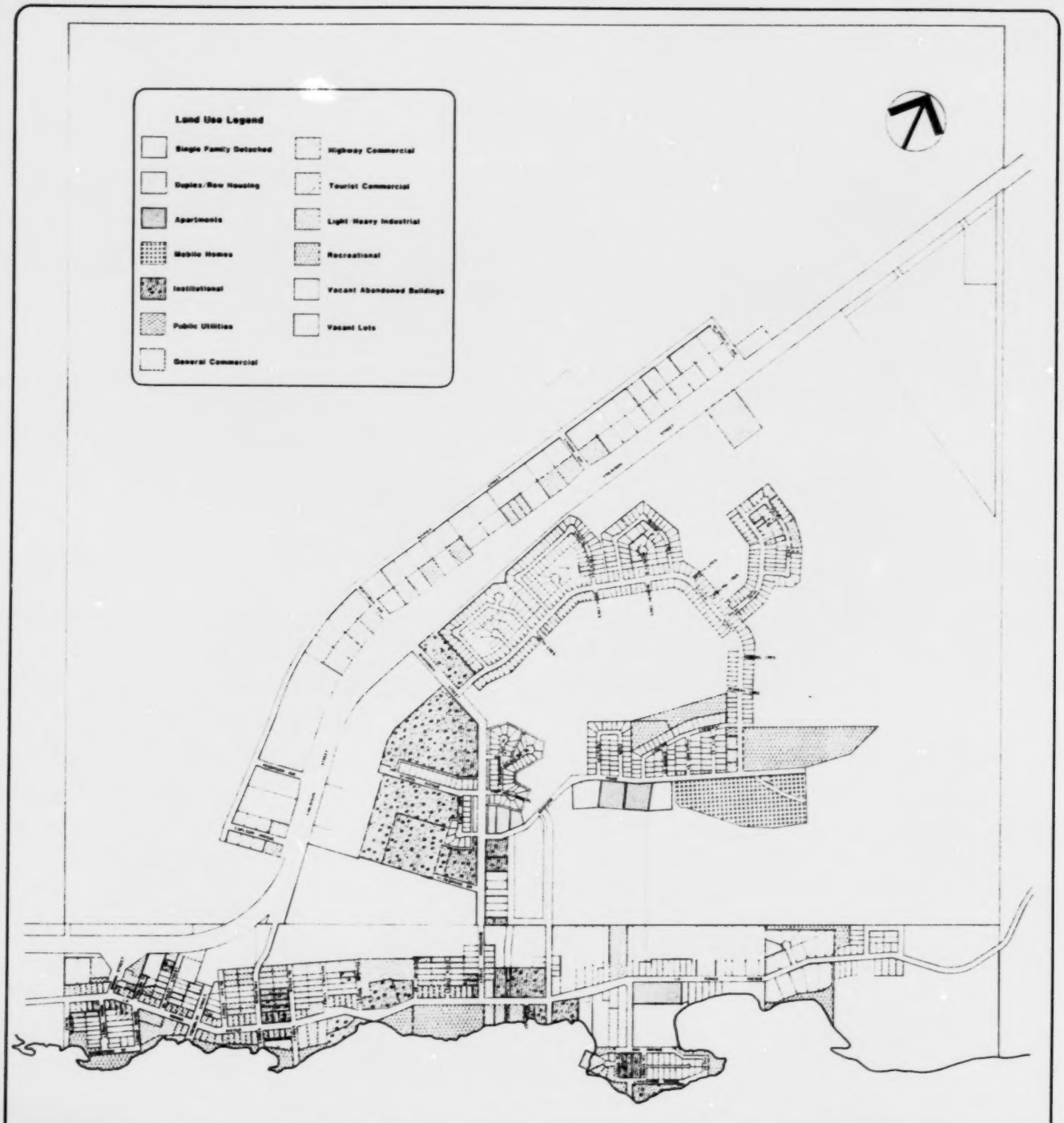
There are four areas of residential land use - La Ronge Avenue East, La Ronge Avenue West, the Centre and Studer Street. Each has distinctive characteristics of its own (Plates 6 and 7).

La Ronge Avenue East is an area of great variety. Located here are the government apartments and townhouses, some of the town's most impressive residences, as well as MacKenzie Point, a cluster of unserviced 'Section 40' houses. The area has excellent access to and views of Lac La Ronge. Police Point constitutes a small, private residential sub-area, with limited access and services.

The La Ronge West residential area also has a mix of housing type, age and quality. Most housing is located along the short cross streets which extend above or below La Ronge Avenue. Housing is mostly single detached, however, there is one large apartment block at La Ronge and Nunn Street, and the cluster of Senior Citizens' duplexes at the upper end of McAuley Street.

The Central Residential Area comprises even-aged, detached housing and two apartment blocks, near the schools, along Boardman Street. This was the first residential subdivision inland from the lake and was constructed for the employees of the Anglo-Rouyn Mine in the 1960's.

To the east and separated by the forest is the newest residential area comprising housing constructed primarily in the 1970's. The area is predominantly detached housing, with a few duplexes and four plexes. To the south of Studer is a large mobile home park, now half empty, while Riese Avenue/Dalby Crescent comprises a mobile home subdivision.




# Current Land Use

# La Ronge Planning Study

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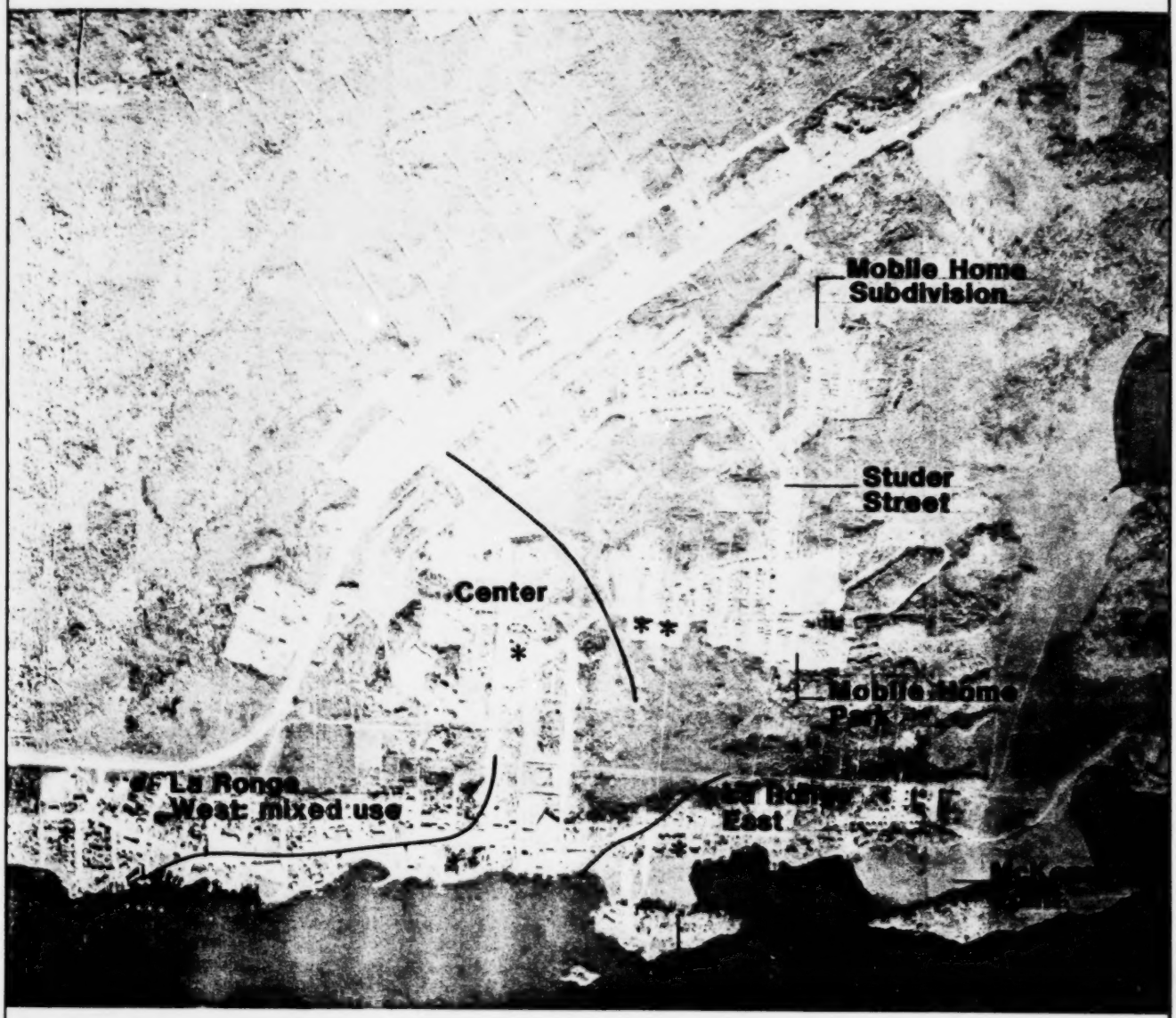


## Residential Areas

- Seniors' Housing
- * Apartment Blocks/Townhouses

## La Ronge Planning Study

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## 3.4 Commercial Land Use

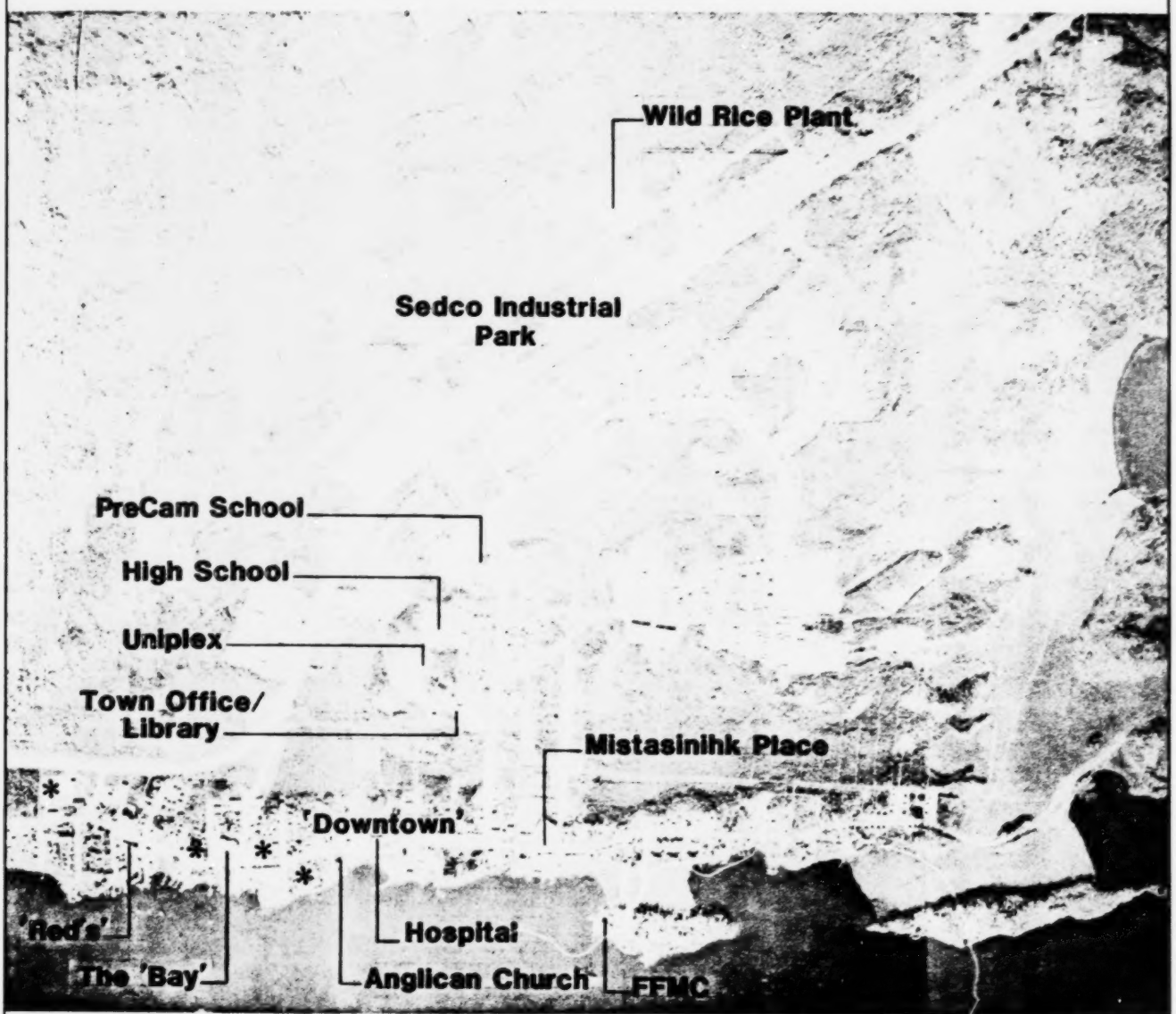
Most commercial land use is concentrated along La Ronge Avenue. Businesses are not continuous: there is an interspersion of businesses, offices, schools, park space and office buildings. Space is limited in the older part of town and new businesses have tended to locate along the westerly end of La Ronge Avenue, and more recently within the industrial park along Highway No. 2. However, there are still a few opportunities for infill or re-development in the central part of La Ronge Avenue. Locally, parking problems occur where space is limited.

La Ronge lacks a compact, well defined Central Business District, although the corner of La Ronge Avenue and Boardman is the crossroads of town. While there are theoretical advantages to a compact CBD, the reality of physical geography and the nature of the development process is such that the current form is likely to continue. Nevertheless, there are some opportunities for redevelopment which would, if pursued, strengthen the focus of the central portion of La Ronge Avenue. Some of the currently vacant or under-utilized parcels are shown on Plate 8.

## 3.5 Industrial Land Use

In the past, industrial land users have been limited, but were mixed in with commercial land use along the waterfront and La Ronge Avenue.

The increase in mineral exploration and construction, regionally, in the 1970's was the stimulus for the development of the industrial park extending along Highway No. 2. A variety of users have located there, from autobody shops to construction companies to manufacturing. There is still a substantial excess of zoned, partially serviced industrial land available in that area.




## Commercial, Industrial, Institutional Facilities

* Redevelopment Opportunities

La Ronge Planning Study

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## 3.6 Institutional Land Use

As indicated above, a number of institutional uses, such as various public buildings, the hospital, the older schools, and the Anglican missions, are located along La Ronge Avenue. More recently, a concentration of institutional buildings has emerged along Boardman Street. These facilities start to define a new focal point for the town. There is considerable room for additional institutional buildings at this site.

## 3.7 Parks and Open Space

A comprehensive inventory of parks and open space was conducted as part of the 1984 La Ronge Park Development Study conducted by The UMA Group. The Study included an inventory and assessment of the parks system as well as a strategy for parks development.

The parks and open space system consists of five major parks: Morley Wilson, the former Provincial Park, McKenzie Street and Nunn Street, eighteen additional Public Reserve parcels, both shoreline and inland, the playing fields of Precambrian and Churchill schools, Elks fairground, and extensive areas of town-owned land zoned Parks and Recreation. A detailed breakdown of this Parks system is given on Table 1, while designated open spaces are shown on Plate 9.

The Plan demonstrated that La Ronge has ample space for parks and recreational use. What is needed is upgrading and/or redevelopment in some key areas. The Plan identified the following recommendations to upgrade the overall parks system (Plate 10):

1. continuous trail system linking shoreline parks and interior parks;
2. McKenzie Park - upgraded site development into a major park, include R3 area to east.

3. Downtown/Provincial park - major park, integrate into one unit; rename to improve identity; upgrade site development
4. joint use of school playing fields by school and community groups;
5. Nunn Street - neighborhood park - upgraded playground equipment - improved site development.
6. Morley Wilson Park - increase winter use, some realignment of playing fields.
7. provide further areas for active games at school sites and Elks fairground.
8. Muskeg areas: possible development for playing fields for Golf Course.

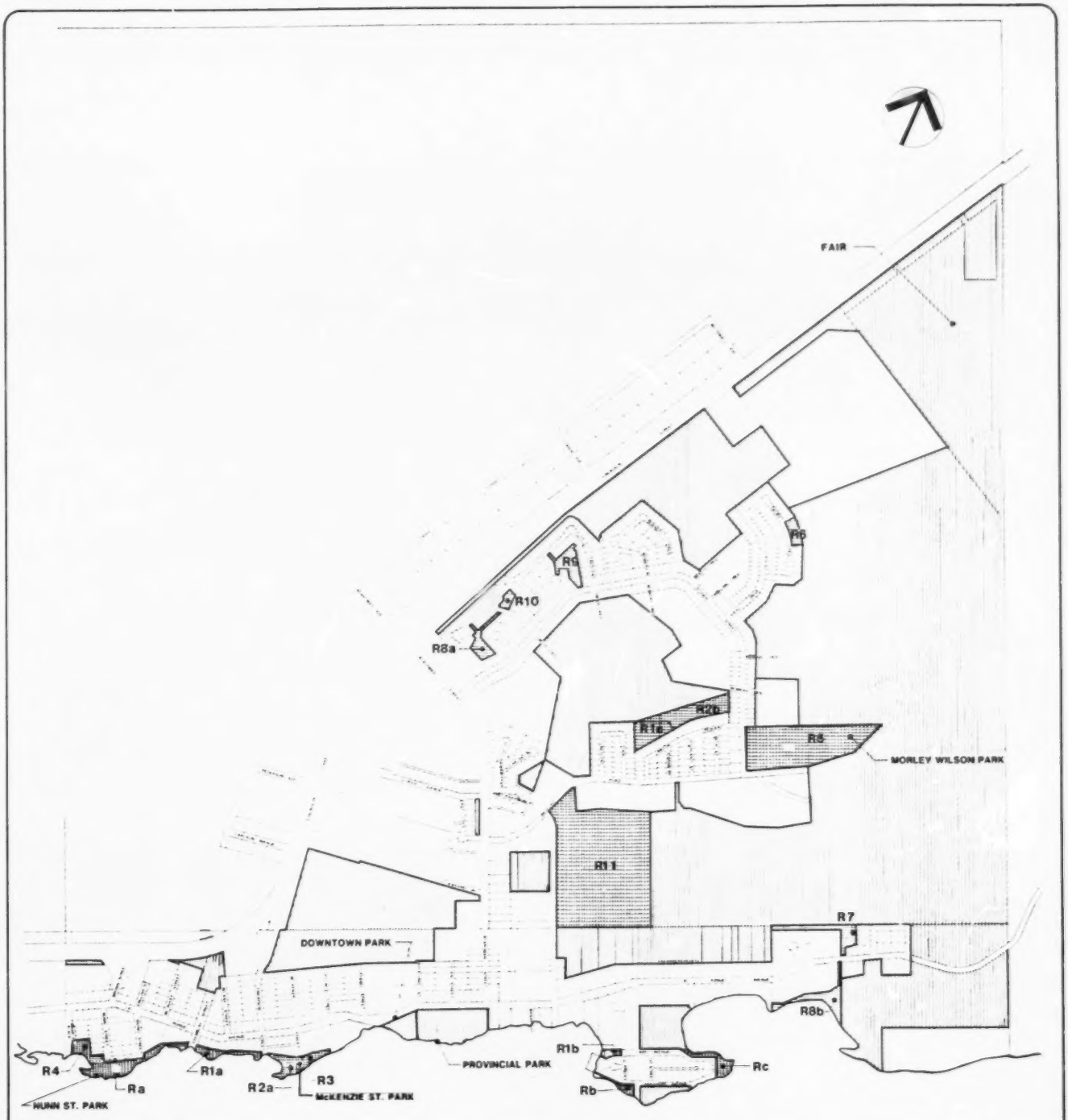
The strategy, as presented, provides the basis for an overall Parks Master Plan. Support for the Concept Plan from the Town is needed to carry out its recommendations.

TABLE 1: LA RONGE PARKS AND OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

| ELEMENT | AREA ha. | AREA ac. | OWNERSHIP | CURRENT USE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Major Parks | | | | |
| a. Morley Wilson | 5.6 | 13.8 | PR-R5 | Baseball, Soccer, Children's Play, Tennis |
| b. "Provincial" | 2.7 | 6.7 | DPRR Lease | Docking, Day use, Picnicking |
| c. Downtown | .7 | 1.7 | Town Ownership | Water Sports, Tennis |
| d. Nunn Street | 1.3 | 3.2 | PR-R4, Ra | Informal Play |
| e. McKenzie | .5 | 1.2 | PR-R2a | Informal Recreation |
| 2. Elks Fairgrounds | | | Town owned | Fair, Rodeo, Special Events, Racing, etc. |
| 3. Shoreland Public Reserve: Non-Recreational Use | 2.1 | 5.2 | PR-Ra, R1a | Seaplane Base, Marina |
| 4. Shoreland Public - Undeveloped | 2.1 | 5.2 | PR-5 parcels | Natural, Some private use for docking |
| 5. Inland Public Reserve | 19.6 | 48.4 | PR-8 parcels | Natural wooded, some informal play and recreation |
| 6. School Complex | | | School Division | Playgrounds, Ball Fields, Tennis Courts |
| 7. RP Zone, Inland, Non-public Reserve | | | Town | Undeveloped - forest and muskeg - Cross Country Skiing |

Abbreviations:

1. PR - Public Reserve
2. DPRR - Department of Parks and Renewable Resources
3. RP - Recreation and Parks Zone




# Designated Open Space

# La Ronge Planning Study

- RECREATION AND PARKS ZONE
- PUBLIC RESERVES
- PUBLIC RESERVE ZONED RP

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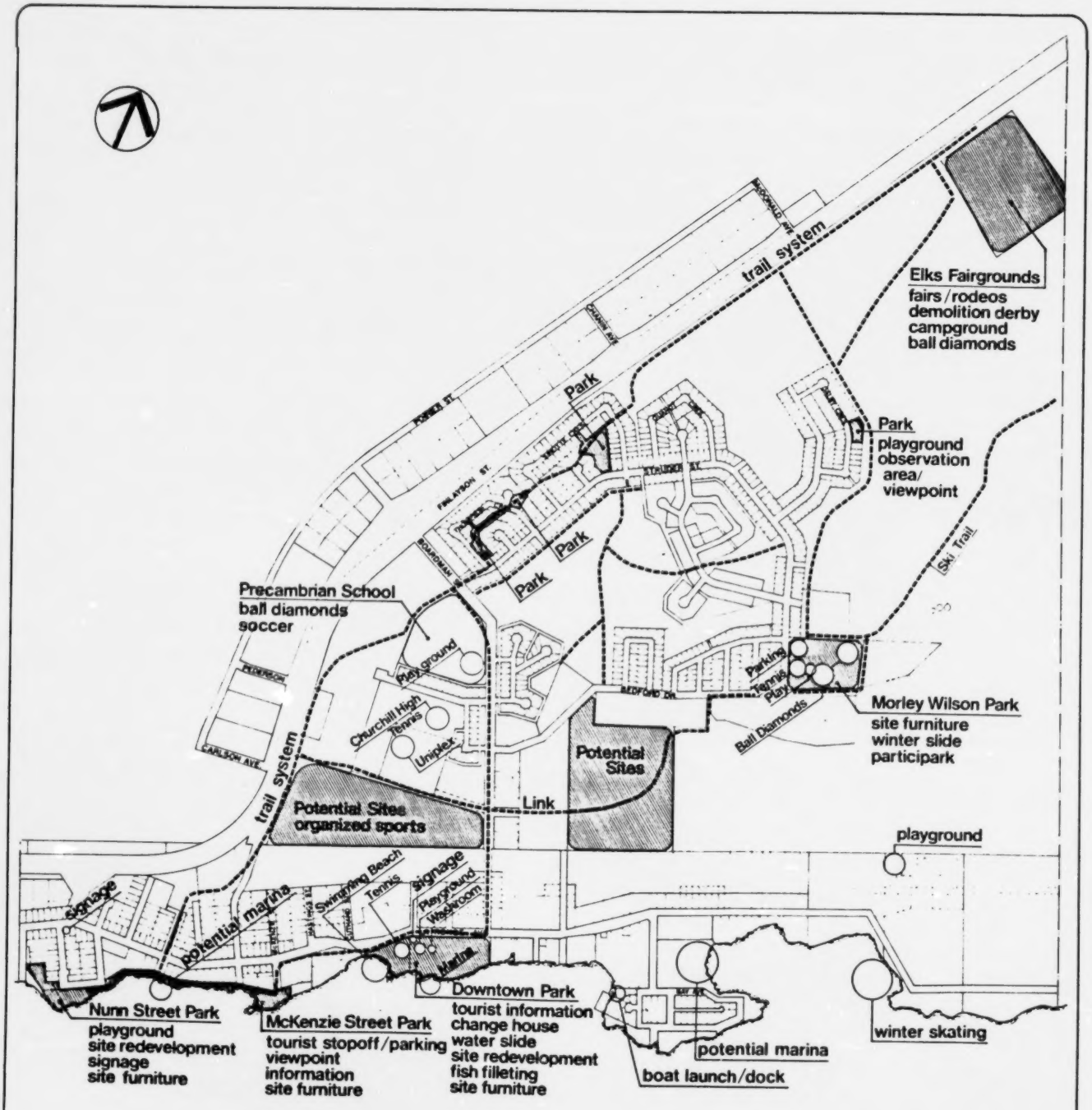


# Parks and Open Space Plan

## La Ronge Planning Study

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## 3.8 Shoreline Issues

The shoreline serves many important functions to the La Ronge community. It provides a scenic setting for resident and tourist alike. It provides the setting for a variety of water based activity - water sports, marinas, float plane bases, snowmobiling and planes in winter. Various land uses complete for limited shoreline space: residences, business, parks and open space, industrial uses, tourist operations.

The ownership and hence management responsibilities are fragmented. Of the total 4.7 km of shoreline, 1.9 km (40%) is public reserve, 1.9 km (40%) is titled land-privately and Town owned, .65 km (13%) is downtown/provincial parks/Anglican Church, while the remaining .2 km (6%) is road allowance.

The overall issue is to organize the overall waterfront so that all uses - open space, recreation, business and industry are adequately served, in a harmonious and safe manner. Related issues are: how the shoreline can be most enhanced to appeal to residents and the public, the effect of flood-plain zoning on commercial and other development, the extend of commercial leases on public reserves, and whether public reserves can be closed to facilitate use by adjacent land owners. A policy and program to organize land use along the shoreline is clearly in order.

## 3.9 Housing

Statistics Canada provides fairly comprehensive information regarding housing in La Ronge for 1981. In June 1981, there were 785 dwelling units in La Ronge. It is estimated that there have been 28 housing completions since 1981, bringing the current housing stock to 813 units, assuming no demolitions.

Given a population of 2,579 in that year, the average occupancy rate was 3.3 persons per dwelling unit. This is somewhat higher than the provincial average of 2.8 persons, but considerably lower than the ratio for Census District No. 18 of 4.3 persons per dwelling.

As is to be expected in a relatively new town, over two-thirds of the housing stock has been built since 1971, as shown in Table 2. This is somewhat typical of northern Saskatchewan, but for the province as a whole, the comparable figure is about thirty percent.

TABLE 2: AGE OF HOUSING

| Year of Construction | Number | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Before 1946 | 15 | 1.9 |
| 1946 - 1960 | 90 | 11.5 |
| 1960 - 1970 | 125 | 15.9 |
| 1971 - 1981 | 555 | 70.7 |
| Total | 785 | |

Source: Statistics Canada

The general condition of housing is good. The 1981 Census listed only 45 housing units (six percent of total) as being in need of major repairs.

The current supply of conventional housing in all categories appears to be more than adequate for immediate demand. The possible exception would be specialized housing types for senior citizens or other special interest groups.

With regard to tenure, the 1981 census showed that only about 35 percent of housing is owner-occupied, with the balance being rental housing.

The decline of provincial government employment in the past few years created an excess of staff housing units. In 1984, 83 single detached units were transferred from the Department of Supply and Services to the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC). A number of these have been vacant for some time.

The Housing Corporation also took over administration of two apartment blocks for government staff housing. While some of these are still occuped by government staff, vacancies provide opportunities for accommodation of out-of-town students in vocational or technical training programs.

The housing surplus also creates opportunities for adapting units to special needs such as interval houses or hostels for out-of-town hospital patients.

The Housing Corporation administers 58 single detached units of public housing in La Ronge, under the so-called Section 40 program. In mid-1984, eight units were being renovated and six others were vacant. A number of these units are clustered in the unserviced McKenzie subdivision at the northeast end of town, where they form a sort of ghetto, isolated from the rest of the community. While there may be no immediate solution to the servicing and other problems of this area, it would seem wise in the future to integrate public housing more strategically within the overall community.

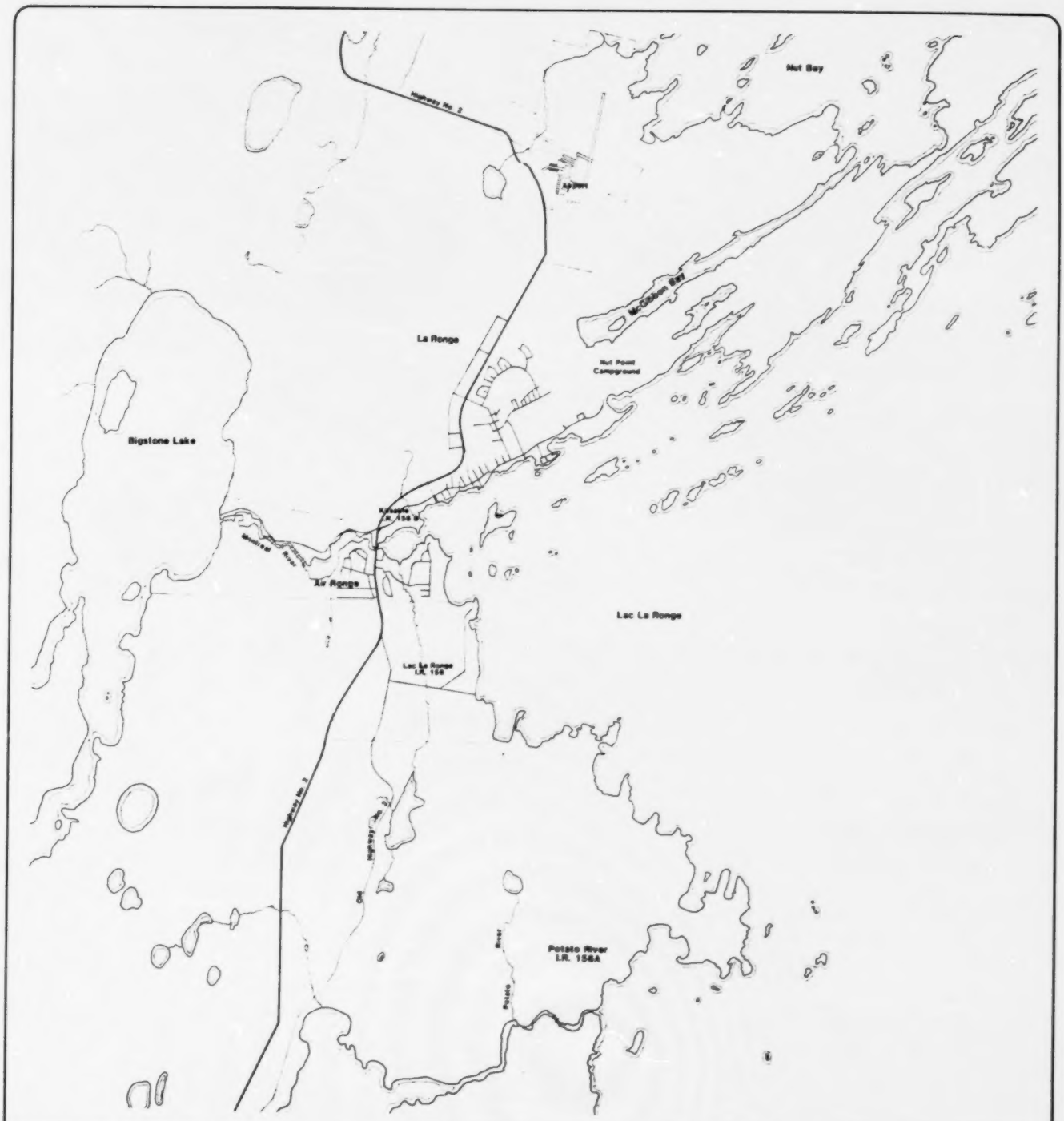
## 3.10 Surrounding Area

The Town of La Ronge is part of the larger community of La Ronge, including the Northern Village of Air Ronge, and the Lac La Ronge Indian Reserve at Kitsakie, the 'Far' Reserve and Potato River.

Immediately to the northeast is the Nut Point Campground, administered by the Department of Parks and Renewable Resources (DPRR), while La Ronge Airport is just north of the Town boundaries (Plate 11).

With the prospect of tourist facility development at McGibbon Bay, along with an access road, the development possibilities of the triangle of land between the Town boundaries, airport and McGibbon Bay become significant. At the same time, the effect of land use constraints such as approach zones and Noise Exposure Forecast (NEF) restrictions should be evaluated and anticipated. The latter are estimates of the areas affected by the noise of aircraft operations. In addition, this area has been identified for some time by the Town as being suitable for golf course development.

Consequently, the Town has a considerable interest in monitoring ongoing developments in this area. The relative costs and benefits of extending the Town's boundaries to include the McGibbon Bay area and/or Airport and intervening lands should be considered before any irrevocable decisions are made.




# Surrounding Area

# La Ronge Planning Study

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## 4.0 LA RONGE - MUNICIPAL SERVICES

### .1 Sewerage System (Plate 12)

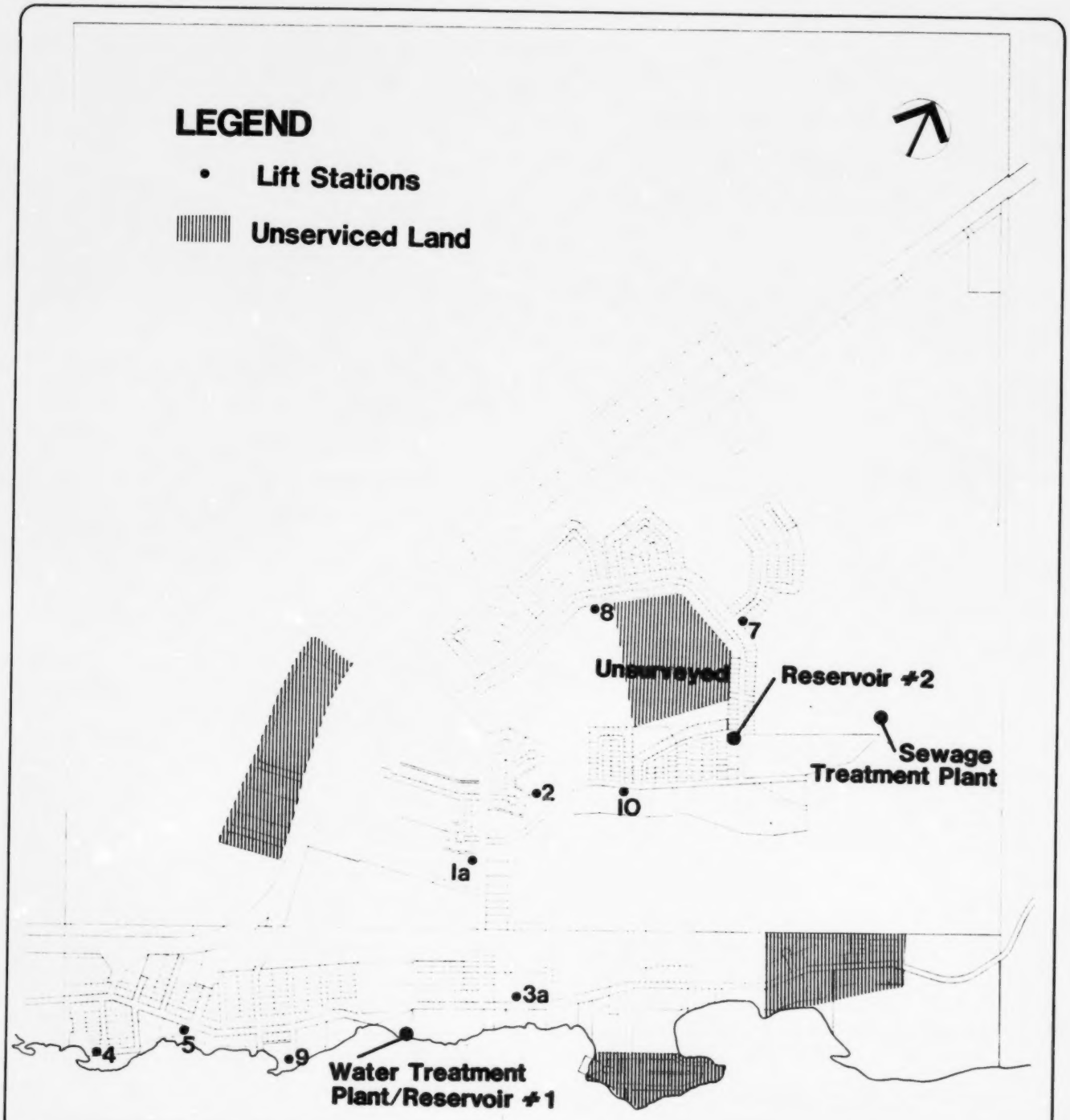
The majority of the developed residential, commercial and industrial areas are served by a conventional gravity system. However, the undulating terrain and extended linear configuration of residential areas have necessitated the extensive use of sewage pumping stations and forcemains. At present there are nine pumping stations and 100 mm, 150 mm and 250 mm forcemains used to transport sewage to an extended aeration sewage treatment plant located at the east end of Bedford Avenue. Treated effluent is discharged into a muskeg area that is linked to McGibbon Bay.

In 1981, the capacity of the sewage plant was investigated and expansion was recommended to handle increased sewage flows. A combination of the town installing water metres (decreasing the bleeding of service connections) and decreased population in response to the downturn in economic conditions contributed to a lower sewage flow and as a result the present plant seems to be adequately handling the process.

The capacities of the sewer mains and pumping stations appear to be adequate for the immediate future.

### .2 Water

Water supply for the town is from Lac La Ronge through a shallow intake line located south of the water treatment plant in downtown La Ronge. The raw lake water is filtered, chlorinated and pumped through a combination of 200 mm,




## Sewer and Water Services

## La Ronge Planning Study

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150 mm and 50 mm water mains to the community. The 50 mm mains are installed on the offstreets from La Ronge Avenue and are insulated and heat traced to prevent freezing during the winter months.

The plant heats and recirculated water through the distribution system during the winter months to prevent freezing problems.

The water system has two storage reservoirs on line; one being located near the water treatment plant and the other at the intersection of Studer Street and Lawton Crescent. A water booster pump is located on line at the site of Sewage Pumping Station No. 3A.

.3 Water System Requirements

The Town of La Ronge commissioned Underwood McLellan Ltd. to study the water distribution system in 1983 and that study recommended the following:

Phase 1 (Immediate Need)

1) To improve the residual pressure in the north portion of the residential area, the east water distribution loop should be divided into two zones. Zone One, south of Studer Street, would have water supplied from the water treatment plant with recirculation in the west loop only and Zone Two, Studer Street and north, would have water supplied through a modified reservoir number two acting as a booster station.

2) Town complete its universal water metering program.

3) Town implement a public relations program to encourage voluntary water conservation.

4) Piping renovations take place at La Ronge Avenue and Boardman Street to increase fire flow potential.

5) Town initiate planning for the construction of a 1.1 million litre (250,000 gallon) storage reservoir.

Phase II (1984-1993)

1) To improve the expected low pressure problems in Zone Two of the distribution system, water storage reservoir number three should be constructed and a Zone Three, The Industrial Park, should be created and supplied from this reservoir.

2) To provide higher fire flow capabilities to Zone One and to assist in the filling of reservoir three, a 150 mm supply and return main is recommended on Boardman Street from reservoir three to Diefenbaker Crescent.

3) Town initiate planning for the construction of a 900,000 litre (200,000 gallon) storage reservoir on McDonald and Poirier Avenue.

4) Pumping equipment at reservoir Number Two should be up-rated to meet project demands by 1993.

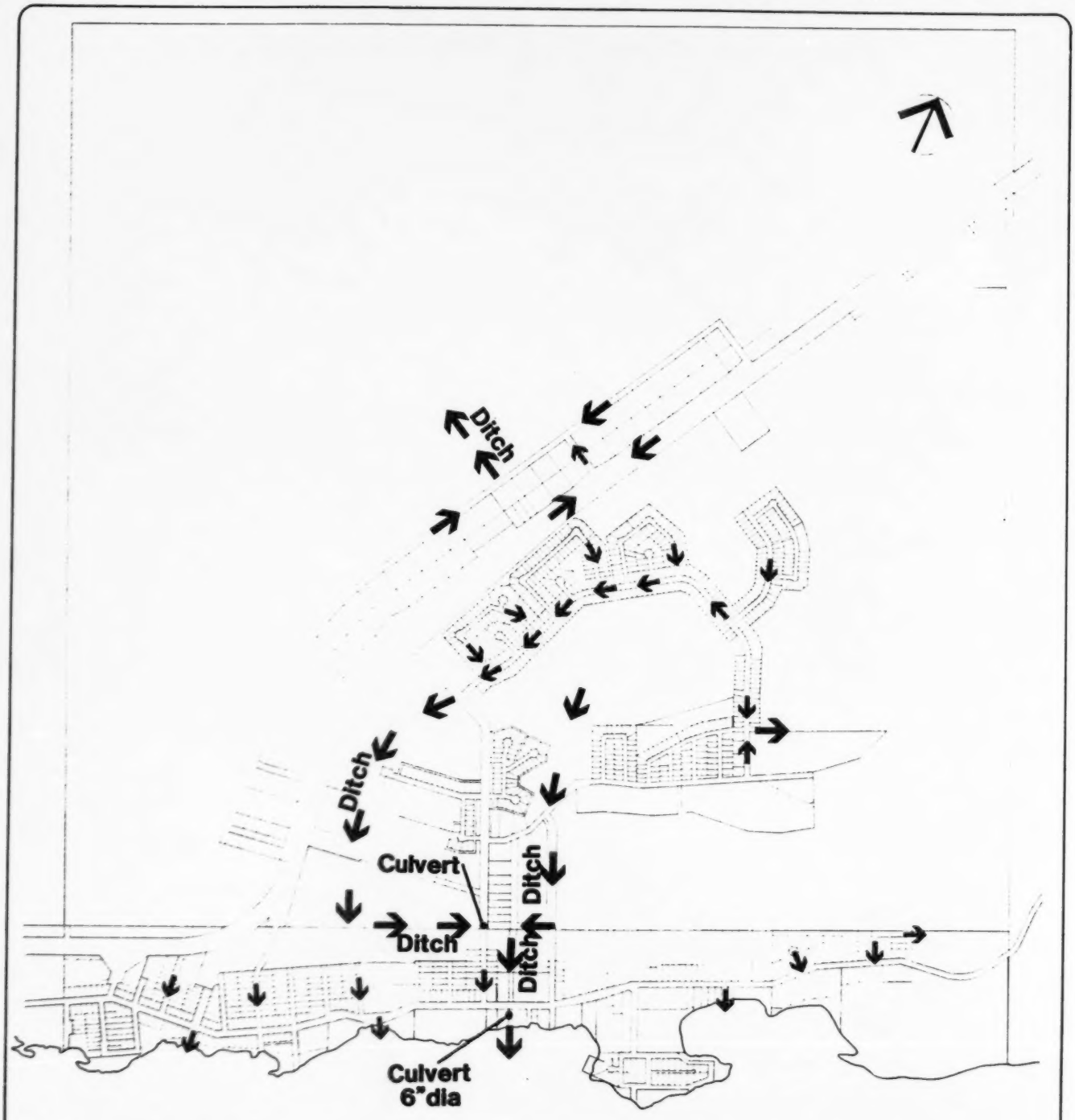
The estimated costs associated with this upgrading is $300,00 and $325,000 for Phase I and II respectively.

.4 Storm Water Drainage (Plate 13)

Storm water and spring runoff drainage is handled by a system of surface swales and ditches. The town has no curb and gutter or storm sewer. Several major collector ditches exist in town to transport approximately 90% of the runoff to Lac La Ronge between Brown Street and Louis Road.

Over the years some of the ditches have sloughed in, collected debris or otherwise been partially blocked and their capacities reduced. Many of the drain culverts have also been partially blocked or in some cases are too small to adequately handle flow from the collector ditches.

These areas should be addressed with cleaning and upgrading as immediate requirements.




**Storm Drainage**

**La Ronge Planning Study**

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## .5 Solid Waste Disposal

The Town of La Ronge, Northern Village of Air Ronge and the La Ronge Indian Band share in the use of the community landfill. The site is located approximately 10 kilometers south of La Ronge on the old Highway Number 102. The site has been used as a landfill for the past ten years and appears to have adequate capacity for ten to twenty years. The site is well maintained by town forces and contracted equipment.

The site does not appear to interfere with any scattered inhabitants in the area nor does it cause any problems with odour or rodents in the built-up residential areas on the Reserve.

## 5.0 POPULATION

### 5.1 Regional Trends

1. Northern Saskatchewan (Census Division 18) has had nearly four times the rate of population growth as the rest of Saskatchewan. From 1976 to 1981, the population of northern Saskatchewan grew by 19.8 percent, as compared to 5.1 percent for the Province of Saskatchewan as a whole.

2. The disproportionately high rate of increase can be attributed to a number of factors. First of all, the population is young, typical of both northern and native populations. Hence an unusually high number of people are in the years of child-bearing and family formation.

   Second, the seventy percent of population which is native (status Indians and non-status Indians and Metis) shows a much higher fertility rate than the southern, non-native population, and families are larger as a consequence. For the north as a whole, the fertility rates are nearly twice those of southern communities. In other words, there are nearly twice as many children per family unit in the north as in the south.

   Finally, there has been substantial in-migration to places like La Ronge and Buffalo Narrows in response to an expansion of government services and resource development. Since 1982, this has levelled off and, in fact, a decline is evident in some communities.

## 5.2 Trading Area

1. The La Ronge trading area, comprising the communities in central northern Saskatchewan, was defined earlier. These communities are connected by road to La Ronge and include: La Ronge, Air Ronge, Missinipe, all La Ronge Band communities (except for Little Red River), Stanley Mission, Brabant Lake, Pinehouse and Southend (see Table 3).

2. The population of the trading area is approaching 7,000, of which La Ronge/Air Ronge comprise nearly half the total. The La Ronge trading area comprises about one-quarter of the population of northern Saskatchewan.

3. The trading area population, exclusive of La Ronge and Air Ronge, is growing at a rapid rate, typical of northern Saskatchewan.

   For example, the La Ronge Indian Band, with a total population approaching 3,000, has recently experienced population growth of 2.5 to 3.0 percent per year. Over 80 percent of its population lives on-Reserve. If this rate of growth persists, the population would double in about twenty-five years.

4. With the decline of Uranium City, the Athabasca Region has no strong regional centre and some of these communities may look increasingly to La Ronge for various services. The regional population is about 2,500, including Wollaston Lake (population 588), Black Lake (population 755), Fond du Lac (population 540), and Stony Rapids (population 285).

TABLE 3

TRADING AREA POPULATION

| Community | Population | Percent of Total | Source |
|---|---|---|---|
| La Ronge | 2,708 | 39.1 | SHSP - 1984 |
| Kitsakie and Far Reserves | 1,070 | 15.4 | INAC - 1982 (est.) |
| Stanley Mission | 925 | 13.4 | INAC - 1982 (est.)<br>SHSP - 1984 |
| Pinehouse | 706 | 10.2 | SHSP - 1984 |
| Air Ronge | 539 | 7.8 | SHSP - 1984 |
| Southend | 490 | 7.1 | INAC - 1982 (est.)<br>UA - 1984 (est.) |
| Brabant Lake | 150 | 2.2 | UA - 1984 (est.) |
| Grandmother's Bay | 130 | 1.9 | Stats Canada 1981, projected |
| Sucker River | 110 | 1.6 | INAC - 1982 (est.) |
| Missinipe | 100 | 1.4 | UA - 1984 (est.) |
| Total | 6,928 | 100.1 | |

Key: INAC - Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
SHSP - Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan
UA - Urban Affairs

## 5.3 La Ronge Population

1. The past population of La Ronge has been characterized, not by a steady, regular growth, but rather by periods of stability interspersed by periods of rapid growth (Table 4).

2. As illustrated in Table 4, population was relatively stable in the years 1969 to 1973 in the wake of the closing of the Anglo-Rouyn Mine. However, the years from 1974 to 1981 were years of extremely rapid growth, with the exception of one year, 1977 to 1978. During that period of time the population more than doubled from 1259 to 2905. At the same time, La Ronge developed a modern community infrastructure: housing, schools, sewer and water, and community facilities.

   Annual rates of growth during this time were commonly between 7 and 12 percent per annum, with the greatest increase being 25.7 percent between 1974 and 1975.

   Since 1981, population has declined by about two hundred people, a response to decline both in government activity and resource development activity.

3. The high rates of growth of the 1970's are much more comparable to those of Alberta "oil patch" communities or commuter suburbs of Edmonton than to towns of similar size in Saskatchewan.

## 5.4 La Ronge Area

1. Three communities together comprise the greater La Ronge area. La Ronge, Air Ronge and La Ronge Indian Reserves #156 and #156B (Kitsakie and Far Reserve) constitute a larger community with a current population of about 4300. The total

community population is growing, a result of positive growth rates within the La Ronge Band, combined with stability in the populations of the Town of La Ronge and Village of Air Ronge.

TABLE 4

LA RONGE POPULATION: 1966 - 1985

| Year | Population Stats Can | Population SHSP | Change | Percentage Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1966 | 906 | -- | | |
| 1967 | | | | |
| 1968 | | | | |
| 1969 | | 1,116 | | |
| 1970 | | 1,226 | 110 | 9.9 |
| 1971 | 806 | 1,221 | - 5 | - 0.0 |
| 1972 | | 1,253 | 32 | 2.6 |
| 1973 | | 1,259 | 6 | 0.5 |
| 1974 | | 1,359 | 110 | 7.9 |
| 1975 | | 1,708 | 349 | 25.7 |
| 1976 | 1,714 | 1,984 | 276 | 16.2 |
| 1977 | | 2,140 | 156 | 7.9 |
| 1978 | | 2,113 | - 27 | - 1.3 |
| 1979 | | 2,378 | 265 | 12.5 |
| 1980 | | 2,644 | 266 | 11.1 |
| 1981 | 2,580 | 2,890 | 246 | 9.3 |
| 1982 | | 2,905 | 15 | 0.5 |
| 1983 | | 2,844 | - 61 | - 2.0 |
| 1984 | | 2,708 | - 136 | - 4.8 |
| 1985 | | 2,786 | 78 | 2.9 |

Summary: 5 Year Trends

1970-1975: 39.9%
1975-1980: 54.8%
1980-1985: 5.4%

## 5.5 Age-Sex Distribution

1. The age distribution of any population is critical to any understanding of whether the population will increase or decline. The age distribution also helps to identify the needs of a particular age group: day-care, schools and recreation for the young, for the economically active, health services for the old, and various types of housing for all. A general overview of the age distribution of the Town of La Ronge is shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

LA RONGE - AGE DISTRIBUTION - HISTORICAL

| Age Group | 1974 | | 1979 | | 1984 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | | No. | % |
| 0 - 14 | 543 | 38.9 | 803 | 33.8 | 897 | 33.1 |
| 20 - 44 | 664 | 47.6 | 1313 | 55.2 | 1415 | 52.3 |
| 45 - 64 | 158 | 11.3 | 232 | 9.8 | 318 | 11.7 |
| 65 + | 30 | 2.2 | 30 | 1.3 | 78 | 2.9 |

Source: SHSP

2. La Ronge has a very young population compared to southern Saskatchewan. While the percentage of people 14 or under has declined during the past ten years, it is still much higher, at 33.1 percent, than the overall provincial percentage of 24.2 percent.

3. The portion of the population in the 20-44 age group is 52.3 percent, considerably higher than 45.9 percent for the province. These are the years where families are formed, houses are purchased, jobs are required and major consumer purchases are made. The size of this group is similar to that of the rest of the province some fifteen years ago.

4. The over 65 age group at 2.9 percent of the total population is typical of the north but is much smaller than for the province as a whole. Provincially, the over 65 age group is 12.1 percent of the total population. However, the number of people in this age group, although small, has more than doubled from 30 to 78 during the past five years.

5. The youthfulness of the population is usually associated with a relatively high rate of growth. Birth rates are high and death rates are low. If migration were not a factor, the natural increase of a population such as that of La Ronge would be in the range of 2.0 percent per year.

6. Population projections were prepared in 1982, based on a cohort-survival method. At that time it was estimated that, even with zero net migration and declining fertility rates, the population would be approaching 4,000 by the year 2000. While there appears to have been net emigration since that time, and that emigration has probably affected the young, mobile portion of the population, it appears unlikely that an event as sudden as the recent decrease in government services is likely to occur again in the future.

## 5.6 Data Sources

1. A few comments are in order to identify some of the implications of relying on several data sources. It is difficult to acquire comparable and consistent data for populations in northern communities. Three potential sources are Statistics Canada, Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan, and Indian Affairs. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages.

2. Statistics Canada (Stats Can) provides population and other information for every fifth year. Population figures are based on an actual count. However, Stats Can data appear to under-estimate populations in northern areas. It may simply be a case of people being out when the census taker calls. The relative isolation of communities may preclude return calls from being made.

3. The Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan (SHSP) population figures are based on administrative records and hence are considered to be relatively accurate. Of considerable importance is the fact that these figures are issued on a year by year basis, so that annual trends can be established.

   There are two drawbacks, however. Communities without a post office may have their residents counted in the communities where mail is received. Thus, the local population is understated, while the population of the larger community with the post office may be over-stated.

In addition, the population figures for Indian Bands do not differentiate between on-Reserve and off-Reserve residents. All residents are accounted to the Band. Consequently Band members living in an off-Reserve community will not be accounted to that community, but rather to the Band. Thus, the population of a non-Reserve community with a population of Treaty Indians would be understated.

4. The third information source for Indian Bands is the departmental records of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). These are updated annually and are probably the best estimate of Indian populations. They do differentiate between on and off-Reserve residents, but do not indicate where off-Reserve residents live.

5. All three sources have been used in this report. An attempt has been made to use the source most appropriate for the particular context.

## 6.0 FUTURE GROWTH SCENARIOS - TOWN OF LA RONGE

Historically, the population of La Ronge has been unsteady: spurts of growth interspersed with periods of stability or slight decline. There is reason to believe that population growth will be more steady and stable in the future. This conclusion is based upon a number of considerations which have been discussed in the sections on regional trends and population.

Specific support for the conclusion of slow but steady growth is provided by the following observations:

1. The town's economy has achieved considerable diversification. Government employment has probably stabilized, while growth is occurring in renewable resource, mineral exploration, and tourism developments.

2. The town's service centre role will continue and be enhanced, given above average population growth within the trading area. This factor, possibly more than any other, ensures the stability of the town.

3. Following from the above, the existence of a stable and diversified economic base would lead to a balance between in and out-migration. Net migration would likely be zero, or there may be slight in-migration.

4. Given zero migration, population growth for La Ronge is ensured through natural increase, that is, the excess of births over deaths. As the population is very young, as shown in the section on population, natural increase alone could produce an annual population growth rate of 1.5 to 2.0 percent per year. This is still substantially above the population growth of Saskatchewan as a whole.

The five year population forecast for La Ronge at 1.5% and at 2.0% area would be as follows:

| Rate | 1984 | 1989 | 1994 | 2001 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.5% | 2,708 | 2,870 | 3,095 | 3,330 |
| 2.0% | 2,708 | 2,930 | 3,235 | 3,570 |

In the less likely event of a gradual decrease in employment, it is likely that the population would remain stable in the neighbourhood of 2,500 - 2,700. High natural increase would tend to offset out-migration.

Should there be a substantial increase in employment, then the in-migration attracted by employment would be in addition to natural increase. This could result in very healthy growth rates of as high as 3 to 5 percent per year for a few years.

However, the most likely growth scenario at this time appears to be the steady growth scenario of 1.5 to 2.0 percent illustrated above.

## 7.0 CAPACITY FOR GROWTH

The current slow-down in the pace of growth has left the town with considerable excess capacity for further growth, in terms of excess housing, vacant lots, infill capacity and servicing capacity.

### 7.1 Residential Land Use and Housing

There are approximately 140 serviced lots available for conventional detached housing, primarily north of Studer Drive. An additional 22 lots for mobile homes are vacant along Dalby and Riese Crescent. These lots, if built upon, could accommodate a population of 550 people, assuming an occupancy of 3.5 persons per housing unit.

Two vacant lots for medium density housing are located on the south side of Bedford Road. These sites could accommodate 80 residential units at medium densities of 20 units per acre. At an occupancy of 2.0 persons per unit, 160 people could live here.

There are about 50 site currently vacant in the trailer park. If filled, these could accommodate another 150 people at residential densities of 3.0 persons per unit.

In summary, there currently exists enough serviced land to accommodate an additional population of 860 people, which would bring the population of La Ronge to about 3,500.

There is also considerable capacity available in terms of existing housing stock, although precise numbers of units are not available. However, given that the peak population was about

2,900, and is now 2,700, with no reduction of housing stock, it appears that there is currently an excess of about 50 housing units of all types. Many of these units are probably government staff housing.

Taking housing vacancies into consideration, combined with serviced lots, it appears there is the capacity to accommodate a population of 3,700 if all serviced lots were developed for housing and all houses were occupied.

Additional lands southeast of Highway 2 and within the town boundaries could, if developed, provide another 100 acres of residential land, accommodating another 1,200 people at 12 persons per acre. If fully developed, and in conjunction with vacant houses and serviced residential land, the town has the capacity to accommodate a population of 4,900 within the town limits and southeast of Highway 2. The figures assume a continuation of current densities. If densities were to increase as a result of smaller lot sizes, a preference for medium density housing or an increase in the number of people per dwelling unit, the population potential would, of course, increase accordingly.

There seems to be no compelling reason today to believe that the population of La Ronge will exceed 5,000 in this century. However, it would have been difficult to predict, back twenty years ago in 1965, before the days of piped water and sewer and paved roads, that La Ronge would be a modern community approaching a population of 3,000 by the early 1980's.

The message in this situation really is to plan for any eventualities. Year to year monitoring of growth prospects relative to the capability to absorb and accommodate growth or, conversely, to buffer the effects of decline, is a worthwhile function for the town.

## 7.2 Commercial and Industrial Land Use

At first glance it might appear the "downtown" is completely developed. Space is limited by the bedrock ridge to the north and the lake to the south. However, there are a few vacant under-developed or potential redevelopement areas.

A brief overview of the land along La Ronge resulted in the following properties being identified.

1. Lots 7-10, Block 9. South side of La Ronge Avenue between Tremblay and McKay Street. About .8 acres, zoned C1. Overlooks the lake.

2. Lots 1-5,Block 10. North side of La Ronge Avenue between Finlayson. About one acre, zoned C2. Part of schools property.

3. Lot 1, Block 17. South side of La Ronge Avenue east of McKenzie. About .7 acre, zoned R3.

4. Lots 6 and 7, Block 18. South of La Ronge Avenue west of McKenzie Street. About .7 acre, zoned C1. Could be incorporated into McKenzie Street Park.

In total, at least 5.2 acres at four sites were identified within the current downtown area. Other properties, such as the hospital site, could become candidates for redevelopment when their present use is discontinued. On Highway 2, on the other hand, the SEDCO Industrial Park contains very extensive areas of land zoned both for industrial and highway commercial use. At least 25 parcels ranging around one acre in size are vacant, along with additional land zoned C2, Highway Commercial.

## 7.3 Institutional Land Use

Parcel B lies between Precambrian School and Highway No. 2. It is zoned institutional and has an area of over 30 acres. It would be suitable for facilities such as a hospital, recreational facility or other uses. Development of this site would complement the core institutional area comprising the schools and arena and new town office which has developed along Boardman Street.

## 8.0 LAND USE MANAGEMENT - THE ZONING BYLAW

### 8.1 Introduction

Zoning is the major technique available to a community to manage the use of land. It is especially effective when used in conjunction with policies on land use which provide guidance for the development of the form of the community.

Zoning should achieve a number of objectives in the area of land use management. These objectives include the following:

1. To establish a system for Council for managing and controlling the development of land;
2. To implement the land use recommendations of the Basic Planning Statement;
3. To separate potentially conflicting land uses;
4. To designate areas for future development, based on the growth requirements of the community and the suitability of land for development;
5. To establish basic site development criteria: lot size, parking standards, front, side and rear yards, etc.;
6. To avoid the development of lands which are unsuitable for development.

Many zoning issues involve to alter zoning districts or district boundaries. A series of general principles are needed to guide Council in making these types of decisions. These principles are contained within the policy plan or Basic Planning Statement, which is a separate document.

## 8.2 Zoning Districts

The following is a brief description and analysis of the existing zoning bylaw. When considered in conjunction with the pattern of existing and future land use, the discussion forms the basis for suggesting changes and improvements.

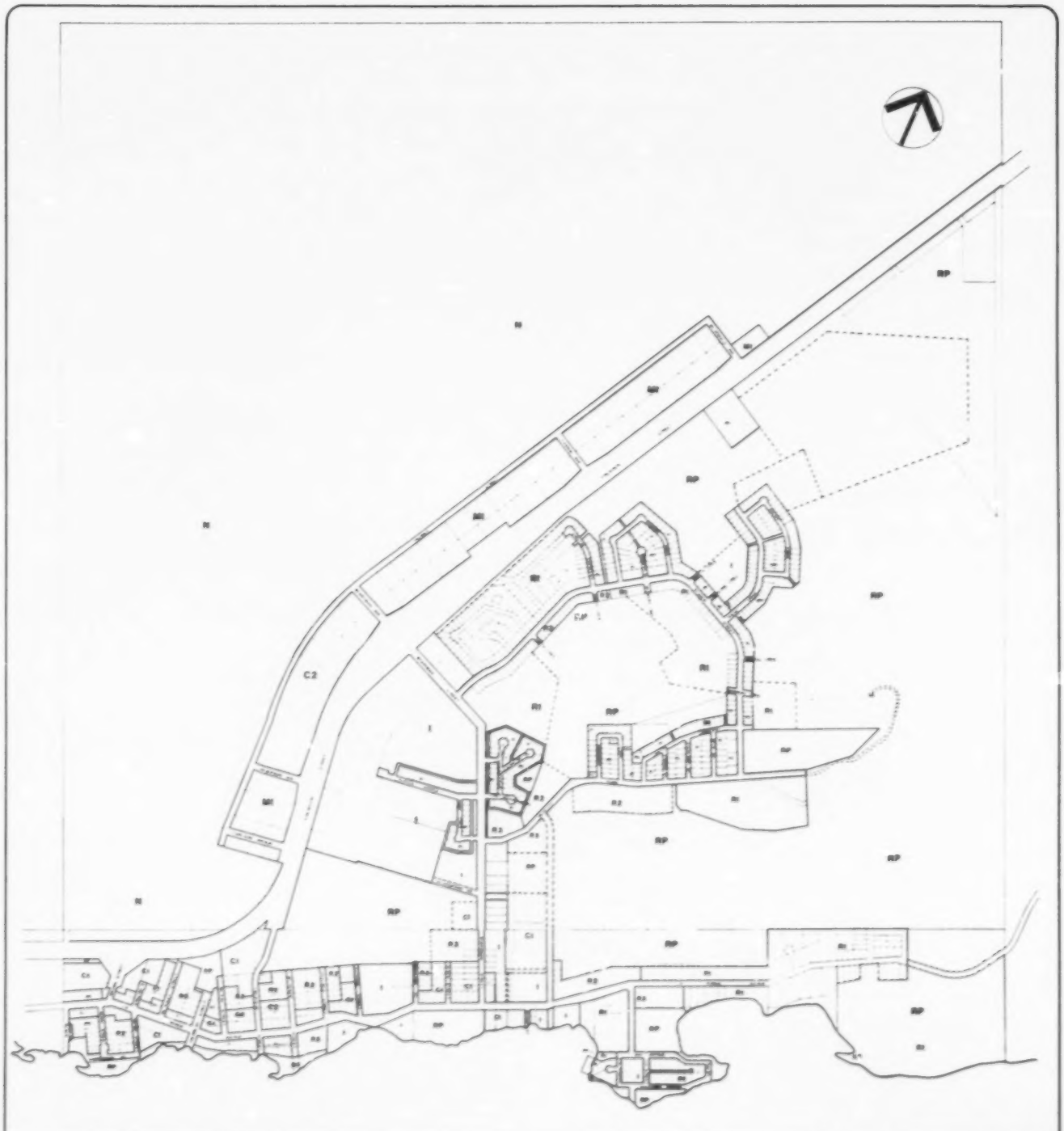
The zoning controls contain ten land use districts (Plate 14). There are four residential districts, two commercial districts, and one industrial, institutional, natural and parks and recreational district.

### .1 Residential Districts

The R1, R2, and R3 zoning districts are differentiated primarily by their permitted uses. Regulations appear to be nearly identical for each type of use or structure. However parking requirements are 1 per unit in the R1 and R2 and 1.25 in the R3 district. Parking requirements are stated by district, rather than by use.

The R1 district permits only single detached housing, along with institutional and recreational uses. It is applied most commonly in the newer areas of La Ronge, along Bedford Road, Studer Street and La Ronge Avenue.

The R2 district permits, in addition to single detached housing, apartments, row housing and two unit dwellings. It is the most flexible and inclusive of the residential districts. The R2 district is found in scattered areas throughout the R1 District, and includes the older residential areas in the southwest part of town.



# Zoning Districts

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Semi-detached dwellings are not defined and site requirements are not stated. Consequently, side by side, two unit dwellings with individually titled lots could not be built legally in La Ronge.

The R3 district permits no single detached dwellings, only multiple unit dwellings. This district includes only six or seven parcels along the main streets of La Ronge - La Ronge Avenue, Broadman Street and Bedford Road.

While the pattern of land use demonstrates that the bylaw appears to have met its objectives, there are several details which would make the bylaw easier to administer and more up-to-date. Suggested changes are as follows:

1. Eliminate the R3 district as being unnecessary.
2. Include two-unit dwellings in the R1 district.
3. Consider lowering the site frontage requirements for semi- detached dwellings to 11 metres for each dwelling unit. The attached side of the dwelling would have a zero side yard.
4. Consider stating parking requirements by use rather than by district.
5. Consider increasing the parking requirements to 1.5 spaces per unit for multiple-unit dwellings.
6. Consider increasing site and side yard requirements on corner sites.

.2 Commercial Districts

There are two commercial districts which are similar in their permitted uses but vary widely in their development standards.

The C1 districts comprises most areas within the downtown area. Requirements for site area and setbacks are minimal - minimum lot size of 2,500 square feet, minimum frontage of 25 feet, zero front yard for most uses, zero side yard. Most buildings and sites, in fact, far exceed the minimum requirements. However, in theory, buildings could be built to the front and side property line anywhere in the C1 district, including some properties fronting Highway 2.

The C2 district has much more stringent minimum requirements - a minimum site size of 1.86 acres or .75 hectares. It affects two sites on La Ronge Avenue and a number of properties between Pedersen and Boardman Street on Highway 2 which appear to be part of the Industrial Park. Functionally, there appears to be no difference between these properties and the rest of the industrial park properties, yet the minimum site requirements are eight times as great.

The C2 district has been amended to list all C1 uses as discretionary uses. However, some C1 uses are already listed in the C2. Editorial change is needed to provide consistency.

The purpose and function of this zone seems to be ambiguous. Some rationalization of the C2 zone seems to be in order. Perhaps it could serve best as being between the C1 and the industrial zone in terms of land use and development standards.

Suggested changes for the C2 zone are:

1. Bring the minimum site requirements in the C2 district in line with these in the M district.
2. Rationalize permitted and discretionary uses in the C1 and C2 districts.
3. Incorporate highway commercial uses into the C2 zone.

.3 Industrial District

The industrial district seems to be reasonable in terms of its permitted and uses and development standards. This zoning is applied to the SEDCO industrial park. It might be worthwhile to specify the C1 uses as discretionary uses within this zone.

.4 Institutional, Parks and Recreation and Natural Zone

The institutional zone provide sites for future schools, public buildings, hospital and churches. It serves a useful purpose in this respect. Its permitted uses include some recreational uses as well. The existing schools, provincial government building, Uniplex, day care, municipal offices and churches are zoned institutional.

The parks and recreation district comprises specific active and passive recreation uses. It is the second largest land use district as it comprises virtually lands within Highway 2 which have not been developed.

The natural district is the most restrictive district. Permitted uses are confined to passive recreation activities and resource extraction. It comprises all unsurveyed lands lying to the west and north of Highway No. 2. What is unclear is whether these lands are intended to be left natural for all time or whether the area can be considered to be a long-term reserve area for urban expansion. A policy statement to clarify this point is recommended.

.5 Other Suggestions

Several other suggestions are made as follows:

1. Regulations for all uses and districts be shown in chart form. This would aid comprehension and comparability.

2. The performance standards section be included as a matter of policy within the Basic Planning Statement instead of being included in each district. This would substantially decrease the length of the document.

## 9.0 SUMMARY

This Planning Study provides a written and graphic description and analysis of the Town of La Ronge in the mid 1980's. The Town is strategically located to benefit from growth and development in Saskatchewan's North. Increasing diversification in its economic base provides reasonable prospects for economic growth. The land use and servicing systems appears to be adequate to accommodate increments of growth without major improvements.

There are several areas of improvement which would be of benefit to the Town. Street upgrading, improved circulation, an upgraded parks system, and resolution of watefront conflicts are some of the ongoing issues facing the Town. Suggestions are made to provide a more rational zoning bylaw to implement land use decisions.

The discussion in this document is intended as a background to the Town's development policies which are contained within a separate document, the Basic Planning Statement.

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